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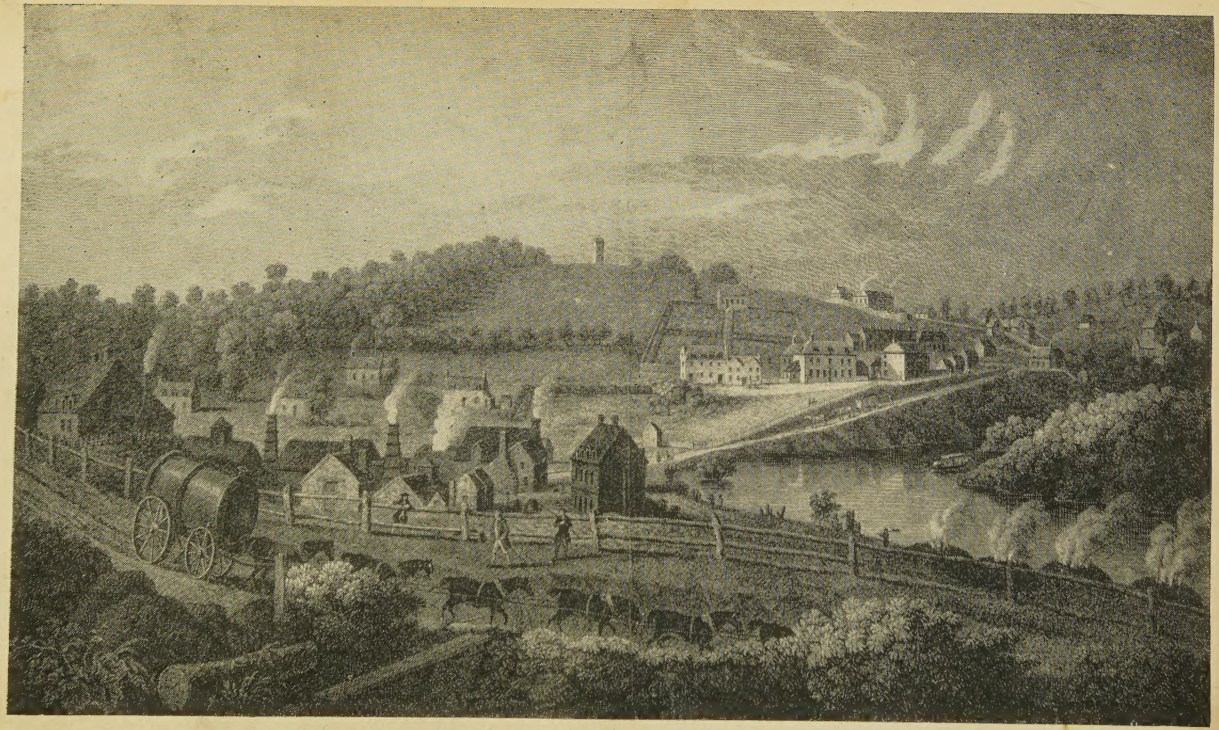

'A view of the Upper Works at Coalbrookdale, in the County of Salop.' An engraving of 1758.

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An Economic History of England

1066–1874

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Charlotte M. Waters

B.A. London

Late Head Mistress of the County School for Girls, Bromley

Oxford University Press

London: Humphrey Milford

1925

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PREFACE

THERE are signs nowadays that teachers are anxious to replace a great deal of the political history now taught, by a study of the life and business of the common people, but that they find it difficult to obtain books suitable for their purpose. Several books on social history have appeared, but most of them are written for lower and middle school children. On the other hand, the standard economic histories are too full for any but adult students. This book aims at something between.

No pretension is made to an extended study of the original sources. The matter of the book is based on the various standard histories already written and on special monographs on different subjects. Where controversial points occur, I have done my best either to state the case of both sides clearly, as in the early history of the Manor, or to select what seems to me the more likely theory on the basis of the evidence offered by the disputants, as in the story of sixteenth-century enclosures.

Obviously for a book based so much on the work of others complete acknowledgement of help is impossible. No one who is working in this field can fail to express his indebtedness to the histories of Professor Ashley, of the late Archdeacon Cunningham, and of Mr. E. Lipson, and to the works of Mr. R. E. Prothero (Lord Ernle), Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, and Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Hammond. All the writers mentioned in the lists of books on pp. 307–8 and 593, have in varying degrees been drawn upon from time to time. Most of the information as to the position of women at different periods has been supplied to me from the as yet unpublished researches of Miss A. B. Dawson, M.Litt. (Dunelm.), to whom, and to Miss M. M. Bone, B.A. (London),

my thanks are due for constant encouragement as well as f help in checking and revising the manuscript.

I desire especially to acknowledge the courtesy of Messr Longmans, Green & Co. in allowing me to quote actual extrac from *English Farming Past and Present*, by R. E. Prothe (Lord Ernle) ; *History of Trade Unionism*, by S. and B. Webb and *The Village Labourer*, by J. L. and Barbara Hammond.

I am anxious also (in spite of his reluctance) to acknowled that all the work of selecting the illustrations in both parts h been done by Mr. J. de M. Johnson, Assistant-Secretary to th Delegates of the University Press. Had I been less inexperienc and so realized how much the success of the book would be d to his share in its making, I should not have agreed originally his remaining anonymous. My part in the illustrating h consisted merely in expressing my pleasure in the variety an suitability of his finds.

The design on the cover is from a medieval jetton or ' castin counter ', and represents the casting-board or *scaccarium* used b the medieval merchant in his calculations.

CHARLOTTE M. WATERS.

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION

PART I. HOW MEN LIVED IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Chapter 1. The Village 1
2. Towns and Trade 19
3. The King's Revenue. The Army . . 26

PART II. CHANGES BY THE END OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Chapter 1. The Manorial System in its Prime . . 32
2. Growth of the Towns. Rise of the Gilds 51
3. Home and Foreign Trade . . . 77
4. Taxation. Money 88

PART III. THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

Chapter 1. The Decay of Villeinage and the Breakdown of the Feudal System . . 101
2. The Woollen Industry 120
3. War, Trade, and Economics . . . 143
4. The Mediaeval Church 158

PART IV. 1500–1660

Chapter 1. Rural England in the Sixteenth Century 174
2. Industry and the Towns . . . 195
3. Overseas Trade and England's Expansion 217
4. Government Policies 241

PART V. 1660–1750

Chapter 1. Rural England from the Restoration to the Eve of the Great Enclosures . . 267
2. Manufacture, Trade, and Commerce . 279
3. Government Policies and Taxation . . 290

PAGE

PART VI. 1750–1834

1. The Agrarian Revolution . . . 311
2. The Industrial Revolution . . . 333
3. Commerce. Transit. Finance . . 392
4. Legislation and Government Action. Economic Theory. Taxation 412

PART VII. LAISSER-FAIRE TRIUMPHANT

1. High Farming and Free Trade. 1834–74 . 467
2. Industrial England from the Reform Bill to the Education Acts 486
3. Communications. World Trade . . 532
4. The Chartists. Economic Theory. Government Measures 564

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE . . . 307, 593

INDEX 597

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

A View of the Upper Works at Coalbrookdale, in the County of Salop . . . . . *Frontispiece*
Handwriting, 1086. Specimen of Domesday Book 2
A Balk or Dividing Strip, Upton St. Leonards. (Photograph by Mr. A. J. Lumbert) 4
The Lynches at Upton St. Leonards. (Photograph by Mr. A. J. Lumbert) 5
A Forge. (MS. Harl. 603.) (By permission of Messrs. Cassell) . 9
Ploughing. (From the Saxon Calendar) 11
A Walled Town. An early view of Hull 21
Saxon Footmen and Norman Cavalry. (Bayeux Tapestry) . . 30
Map showing 'Three-field' System 33
A Windmill. (Luttrell Psalter. Early fourteenth century.) (By permission of Messrs. Cassell) 38
A Flourmill. (Queen Mary's Psalter. Royal MS. 2 B vii, Brit. Mus. Early fourteenth century) 39
Pruning and Planting Trees. (Queen Mary's Psalter. Royal MS. 2 B vii, Brit. Mus. Early fourteenth century) 40
Mowing. (Ditto) 41
Weeding. (Ditto) 42
Reaping. (Ditto) 43
Wine-making. (Ditto) 44
Sowing Corn. (Ditto) 45
Catching Rabbits with Ferret and Net. (Ditto) 46
Catching Birds with Net. (Ditto) 47
Threshing Corn with Flails. (Ditto) 48
Rope-making. (Luttrell Psalter. Early fourteenth century.) (By permission of Messrs. Cassell) 49
Rustics of the Thirteenth Century. (Strutt, *Dress and Habits of the People of England*) 50
A Bakehouse. (MS. Canonici liturg. 99) 53
Building Operations in the Reign of Henry III. (Cott. MS., Brit. Mus.) 64
A Dispensary. (MS. at Trinity College, Cambridge.) (By permission of Messrs. Cassell). 65
A Loom. (Ditto.) (By permission of Messrs. Cassell) 66
A Country Cart. (Luttrell Psalter. Early fourteenth century.) (By permission of Messrs. Cassell) 81
Merchant with Cartload of Merchandise. (MS Reg. 10 c. viii. 1496) . 82
King's Seal for Recognizances of Debts at Oxford. Temp. Rich. II, 1377–99 83
Principal Trade Routes 86
Three Methods of Calculating. (Douce Prints, 1543) 94
Reckoning with Casting-counters. (Reusner's *Aureolorum Emblemata*, 1591) 95
Specimen of Pipe Roll, 1130. (Pipe Roll I, M. II) 96
Stocks of Thirteenth-Century Exchequer Tallies 97
The Merchant. (From the Ellesmere MS. of Chaucer) 104
The Reeve. (Ditto) 105

PAGE

The Man of Lawe. (From the Ellesmere MS. of Chaucer) . . 106
The Somnour. (Ditto) 107
The Rich at Dinner. (Queen Mary's Psalter. Royal MS. 2 B. vii, Brit. Mus. Early fourteenth century) 108
Domestic Costume, Fifteenth Century. (Strutt, *Dress and Habits of the People of England*) 109
A Farm in February. (*Les Très Riches Heures de Jean de France, Duc de Berry*. Early fifteenth century) 114
Labourers and Artificers of the Fifteenth Century. (Strutt, *Dress and Habits of the People of England*) 115
Canterbury Pilgrims. (From MS. of Lydgate's *Storie of Thebes*. MS. Reg. 18 D. II) 119
The Ancient Wool-house, Southampton. (Photograph by Professor F. Clarke) 124
Spinning. Second half of Fifteenth Century. (Douce MS. 195. *Romaunt de la Rose*) 125
The Custom House. King's Lynn 130
Blakeney Harbour 131
The Elaborate Staging of a Miracle Play. (MS. Fr. 18536. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) 133
Brewing. (From Comenius's *Visible World*) 140
Winding off Silk from the Cocoons. (From Geffe's translation of de Serre's *Perfect Use of Silk-wormes*) 141
Warship, about 1485. The earliest known drawing of a four-masted ship 148
Calais Town and Harbour. From an old MS. 149
Lady de Coucy landing at Boulogne. (From a Harl. MS., supposed to have been written between 1460–80) 151
Henry VII. (Christ Church, Oxford) 153
A Part of the Standard of Weights and Measures in the Exchequer. Temp. Henry VII. (From *An Authentic Account of the History of Bread, Wheat, Malt, &c.*, 1638) 154
The Town Bushel, Southampton. Granted by Henry VII . . 155
A Monk. (Drawing of a Franciscan by Matthew Paris) . . . 162
A Parish Priest. (Wm. Goode, Rector of Dogmersfield, from a brass in Odiham Church) 163
The Great Barn, Great Coxwell. (Photograph by Tomkins & Barrett) 166
A Mediaeval Hospital. St. Cross, Winchester. (Photograph by H. W. Salmon & Son) 167
Building a Church. (From Holinshed's *Chronicles*, vol. i, 1577) . 170
Ploughing and Digging, Second half of fifteenth century. (From Douce MS. 374. *Miracles of the Virgin*) 181
A Blacksmith. (From Gilbert, *On the Magnet*) 183
Norden's Map of London, 1593 184
Old London Bridge. (From Visscher's 'View of London', 1616) . 186
St. Paul's Cathedral, the Bear Garden, and the Globe Theatre. (From Visscher's 'View of London', 1616) 187
The Bridge House 189
An Elizabethan Mansion. Barlborough Hall, 1583–4 192
A Village Street. (From Holinshed's *Chronicles*, vol. i, 1577) . . 193
A Shoemaker's Shop. (From De Bry, *Emblem. Saecularia*, 1596) . 197
Henry VIII Conferring a Charter upon the Surgeons' Company. (After a picture by Holbein) 201

PAGE
A Merchant engaged on his Accounts. (From Cicero's *Officia*, 1531) . 203
An English Hatter. (From Van Pas, *Les Abus du Mariage*) . . 205
Costume: Peasantry. Sixteenth century. 207
A Printing Office of about 1600 209
The Market Place, Shrewsbury 211
Indians Smoking. (From Thevet, *Cosmographie universelle*, 1575) . 213
Ancient Drapers' Hall (formerly Cromwell's House) . . . 216
The Western World. (From Robert Thorne's Map, 1527) . . 218
Discoveries of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries . . . 219
Philip II. The Bodleian portrait 220
Europe in 1559 221
Francis Drake 223
Pewterers. (Schipper, 1568) 225
Sebastian Cabot 227
A Merchantman of the Year 1519 234
A Galley. (From Furttenbach's *Architectura Navalis*, 1629) . . 235
The Henry Grace à Dieu. (From a MS. at Magdalene College, Cambridge) 236
A Galleon 237
Roper and Cordwainer. (From Comenius's *Visible World*, 1672) . 239
Cottages in West Hagbourne, Berkshire 244
Timber Framework of Wattle-and-Daub Building. (Photograph by Mr. E. G. W. Hewlett) 245
A Dyer. (From Whitney's *Choice of Emblemes*, 1586) . . . 249
The Priory Cloisters, Christ's Hospital 255
A Beggar. (From an engraving by Callot. British Museum Collection) 256
A Beggar. (Ditto) 257
Two Pretended Fortune-tellers in the Pillory 258
Whipping Vagabonds at the Cart's tail. (From Harman's *Caueat*) . 259
A Minstrel in the Stocks. (From one of the Roxburghe Ballads) . 260
A Pedlar. (From a Ballad in the Pepysian Collection) . . . 261
Artisans at Work Coining. (From Holinshed's *Chronicles*, vol. i, 1577) 265
A Cross-cut Saw. (From Wither's *Collect. Emblemes*, 1635) . . 268
A Flail. (Ditto) 269
A Blacksmith's Shop. (From Cats, *Proteus ofte Minne-bedden, &c.*, 1627) 274
A Mouse-trap of the period. (Ditto) 275
Jethro Tull. (From a contemporary painting. By permission of the Royal Agricultural Society) 276
Jethro Tull's Wheat Drill 277
Charles Viscount Townshend. (From the portrait by Sir G. Kneller) 278
John Kay 279
Weaving. (After a drawing by Hogarth) 281
Bombay Fort from the Sea 284
Prince of Wales' Fort, Hudson Bay 285
'Various Engines.' (From Comenius's *Visible World*, 1672) . . 286
Various Methods of Transport. (Ditto) 287
Rudyerd's Eddystone Lighthouse, built in 1708 289
English Colonies after the Peace of Utrecht, 1713 297
The Bank of England. The original building 301
English Hatred of Excise. Cartoon showing the Lion and the Unicorn yoked to a Beer-barrel. (By permission of Messrs. Cassell) . 303

PAGE

The Traditional Agriculture; title-page of *The Epitome of the Whole Art of Husbandry*, 1669 310

Open Fields and strip cultivation still surviving at Epworth in Lincolnshire. Photograph lent by Mr. C. S. Orwin . . . 313

Enclosures. Newspaper cutting of August 1801. Enclosure was proceeding at such a pace that even sportsmen were disturbed . 316

The Rise of the Stock-breeder. A newspaper cutting of April 1791 and a picture of the long-horn bull 'Garrick' 321

Rivalry in Breeding. A newspaper cutting of the nineties . . 323

Low Prices of 1750. From *The London Magazine*, Feb. 1750 . . 324

Rising Prices. Table of the Assize and Price of Standard Wheaten Bread, according to an Act passed in the thirteenth year of George III 325

High Poor-rate. From *The Liverpool Mercury*, Nov. 22, 1816 . 326

'Signs of the Times!' From *The Liverpool Mercury*, April 4, 1817 . 327

Clerkenwell Workhouse as enlarged in 1790. From Pink's *History of Clerkenwell* 329

A Map of Eighteenth-Century London and its surroundings. From *A New Map of the Countries Ten Miles round the Cities of London and Westminster and Borough of Southwark*. By T. Kitchin . 334

The South-East Prospect of the City of Norwich. From *The Universal Magazine*, 1753 335

Hargreaves' Spinning-jenny, patented in 1764. From Baines, *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain*, 1835 . . 337

The Revolution in Spinning. The upper picture from a drawing by George Walker, the lower from *Economic Botany: The Cotton Manufacture*, Plate IV 339

Crank Mill, Morley, Yorkshire. Built in 1790, this mill was driven by steam, and was the first to be erected in the neighbourhood. From W. Smith, jun., *Rambles about Morley*, 1866 . . . 340

The Revolution in Weaving. The upper illustration is from *Recueil de Planches*, Paris (1762–77), the lower from Baines, op. cit. . 341

The Coal Industry. 'A view of the mouth of a Coal-Pit near Broseley in Shropshire.' Engraving of 1788 347

The Old Days. Iron Mining. Engraved about 1700 350

The Revolution in Iron. 'An Iron Work, for casting of Cannon; and a Boring Mill. Taken from the Madeley side of the River Severn, Shropshire.' Engraving of 1788 351

A 1788 engraving of the Iron Bridge over the Severn 353

National Fund Subscriptions, 1797 and February 1798. Two newspaper cuttings illustrating the wealth of the landowners and manufacturers 356, 357

'Correct Statements showing the Wages, Deductions, and nett or clear amount of a Weaver's weekly labour.' Cutting from *The Liverpool Mercury* of Dec. 27, 1816 361

Children in a Rope Factory. An eighteenth-century engraving . 363

'The Condition of The West Indian Slave contrasted with that of The Infant Slave in our English Factories.' 367

A Sweep's business card. Lent by Professor Sir Charles Firth . 369

PAGE

The treatment of chimney-sweeps. From *The Liverpool Mercury*, July 19, 1816, and May 23, 1817 371

'Fielden an employer' 374

'English Factory Slaves Pl. 3 Their daily employment.' Cartoon by Robert Cruikshank 381

'The Working-Man's Companion: being an address to the working-men of the United Kingdom,' 1831 386

'The Leader of the Luddites' disguised as a woman. Cartoon of 1812 387

Execution of Luddites, &c. From *The Liverpool Mercury*, April 25, 1817 389

Shipping Insurances. Newspaper cutting of 1795 393

Imports and Exports 1750–1830 at intervals of five years . . 394

Figures for the Port of Liverpool. From Aikin's *Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles round Manchester*, 1795 . . 395

'Fortunes made by Steam,' 1825. From a satirical print . . 396

Coach services. Advertisements from *The Liverpool Mercury* of Aug. 23, 1816, and May 23, 1817 399

Locks and Tolls on the Thames. From Bowles's *Draught of the River Thames* 400

The Bridgewater Canal crossing the Irwell. From Aikin's *Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles round Manchester*, 1795 . 401

Perspective View of part of a Canal with Lock. Engraving made for the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* . . . 402

A steam ferry-boat. Advertisement from *The Liverpool Mercury*, May 2, 1817 405

The Post. Advertisement from Houghton's *Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, Aug. 28, 1696 406

The Growth of the Bank of England. Above, a £100 Exchequer Note of 1709. Below, one of the first £1 notes which were issued in the financial crisis of 1797. Reproduced by the courtesy of the Editor of *The Connoisseur* 409

New London Bridge, with the Lord Mayor's Procession passing under the unfinished arches, Nov. 9, 1827. From Elmes's *Metropolitan Improvements in the Nineteenth Century*, 1827 412

Hunting a Loaf. Broadside of the Corn Laws 414

'A Free Born Englishman!' Satirical Cartoon of 1819 . . 415

The Severity of the Game Laws. Satirical Cartoon . . . 417

The Game Laws. Broadside of the Time 419

Recruiting for the Army. Cartoon by Henry Bunbury (1750–1811). Reproduced by the courtesy of the Editor of *The Connoisseur* . 421

A broadside of Peterloo 422

'Manchester Heroes.' Satirical cartoon of 1819 423

'News of Mr. Cobbett.' From *The Liverpool Mercury*, April 4, 1817 427

Sentences at the Old Bailey. Newspaper cutting of the nineties . 430

Informers. 'Earl Grey's speech to the House of Lords, June 1817. *Liverpool Mercury* 431

PAGE

Parliamentary Debates on the Boroughs. From *The Times*, April 3, 1819 433
Old Sarum 435
A satirical cartoon of 1819, a reply to the resolutions in favour of Universal Suffrage which were being passed by the Reform party all over the country 437
Fox, the demagogue. Cartoon by James Sayers 439
Charity as the specific of the age. A pamphlet of 1797 441
'English Liberty.' Cartoon by William Heath, 1831 443
'Pluralities and absentee vicars.' Cartoon of the eighteenth century 445
Thomas Robert Malthus. Reproduced by permission from the picture at Jesus College, Cambridge 449
Population 1801–71 451
'Owen's Plan.' From a cartoon by William Heath published in *The Looking Glass*, No. 11, 1831 457
'The Comet!!!' Cartoon of 1811 in which John Bull endeavours to snuff the flame of Pitt's taxation 461
National Debt 1715–1837 463
John Bull and the New Taxes. A Broadside of the time . . . 465
An advertisement of Agricultural Implements 469
'The Pig and the Peasant.' Punch Cartoon of Sept. 19, 1863. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch* 477
The Tithe in Kind. Newspaper cutting of the nineties 482
The Parson and his Tithe-pig. Cartoon by Robert Cruikshank . 483
The Colliery of the sixties. Arrangements at a Pit Shaft . . 491
Consett Iron Works, Durham, about 1870 493
The triumph of Gas. Cartoon of 1811 496
The scandal of the coal-mines revealed by the Report of the Royal Commission, 1842. A half-naked girl drawing a loaded truck . 499
Improved conditions in 1869. Getting out the Ten-yard Coal in the Staffordshire Colliery of Bradley, near Bilston 501
Trade Union card of the Curriers. From Traill's *Social England* by the courtesy of Messrs. Cassell 507
The Collier Lad's Lament! A broadside of the 'hungry forties' . 515
'The South Prospect of Leicester.' From *The Universal Magazine*, 1752 523
'The South-West Prospect of Liverpoole.' From *The Universal Magazine*, 1751 525
Development of Towns Population 1801–71 527
'The Gin Juggarnath.' George Cruikshank on the drink problem of the nineteenth century. Cartoon issued 1834 529
Engraving illustrating the early use of rails for coal-wagons. About 1700 533
A Horse-drawn Coach on Rails running between Stockton and Darlington. Newspaper notice, Oct. 14, 1826. Reproduced by the courtesy of the Editor of *The Connoisseur* 535
The Turnpike System at Manchester 537
Stephenson's first train, Sept. 27, 1825. Reproduced by the courtesy of the Editor of *The Connoisseur* 538

PAGE

An early railway ticket and a ticket celebrating the completion of the Newcastle to London Railway, 1844. Reproduced by the courtesy of the Editor of *The Connoisseur* 539

Steam Carriage designed to run between London and Birmingham, 1832 541

Two famous tea clippers, the *Ariel* and the *Taeping*. From *The Illustrated London News*, 1866 546

An early Cunarder, with paddle-wheels and sails. Reproduced by permission of the Cunard Company 547

The straight line of the Suez Canal seen from an aeroplane. (Photograph by Mr. Alan Cobham) 549

The London Docks. St. Katherine's, 1827–8 551

The London Docks to-day 551

Unemployment in Lancashire and emigration. A popular broadside 552

'The Railway Juggernaut of 1845.' Punch cartoon of July 26, 1845. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch* . . 553

The Great Exhibition of 1851. An early example of photography . 555

Imports and Exports 1830–80 558

The Rush for the Gold Regions. Reproduced from *The Annals of San Francisco*, by Frank Soulé, John H. Gihon, M.D., and James Nisbet. New York: D. Appleton & Company, M.DCCC.LV 561

The Telegraph. Exterior and interior of the Telegraph House at New Cross, 1796. Reproduced by the courtesy of the Borough Library of Deptford 565

(*a*) The Great Chartist gathering to present the Monster Petition, and (*b*) Police awaiting the procession in Hyde Park. From *The Illustrated London News* 571

'Work', by Ford Madox Brown (1821–93), painted when he had come under the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites. By permission of the Manchester Corporation 577

A Lunatic. Early in the nineteenth century. From Traill's *Social England* by the courtesy of Messrs. Cassell 581

'Oliver asking for more.' Charles Dickens's exposure of poor-law administration in *Oliver Twist*, illustrated by George Cruikshank 583

The Corn Laws. A broadside lent by Professor Sir Charles Firth . 587

A view of the First Exhibition of the English Agricultural Society at Oxford, 17 July, 1839. From a print lent by Mr. H. Minn . . 595

INTRODUCTION

Economic History is that special branch of the story of man that deals with his means of livelihood, how he produces food, clothing and shelter, and how he distributes them when produced. The word comes from two Greek words, οἶκος house, and νόμος law, and economics is the science of housekeeping. Economic History is the story of man's housekeeping from the simple days of the cave-man, who killed his food and ate it raw, wrapped himself in the skins of the slain and lived in caves which he did not build, right up to the present time, when each one of us requires the help of thousands of his fellows to provide him with food, clothing and shelter for a single day. The questions which the economic history of any nation sets out to answer are roughly these: How did these people feed, clothe, and shelter themselves? Who among them shared in the production? who in the distribution? How far did they arrange for both production and distribution and how far did they leave it to chance? What effect did their systems, or lack of systems, at different times have on their welfare and happiness? How far did they plan consciously for certain results? How far did they act blindly, seeing only the need of the moment? Occasionally we may ask, were they wise or unwise, or whether we now can learn from their mistakes?

Now this aspect of our English story is rather different from that we find in our political and constitutional histories. For one thing it will consist of much less definite events; most of it will be the tale of slow changes working gradually over long periods of time; instead of battles and the deaths of kings, instead of Magna Carta, the Reformation or the Revolution, we shall talk of the Growth of the Manor or the Decay of Villeinage, both of which took centuries, or of the Expansion of Trade and the Rise of Capitalism, neither of them yet complete. But

always we shall be finding answers to the same question, how men and women produced and distributed material wealth? We shall often find that those very definite political and constitutional events, those wars and laws and methods of government, have their roots in the soil of our economic story, and that before we can understand them we must understand the nation's housekeeping. For it is just as important to know how a nation earns its living if we are to understand its other acts, even its art and literature, as it is to know the same of a man, if we are to grasp his whole personality and the true significance of his work.

The plan in what follows is to take pictures of our nation at intervals of about 200 years, noting the changes and trying to see what has brought them about. At each stopping place we take either three or four pictures, one of rural England, one of the towns, and one of the government; this last only from the point of view of the national housekeeping, politics and law being left to other history books. In some periods we add a picture of overseas trade, and once one of the mediaeval church. We have begun in the eleventh century because Britain was conquered then for the last time, and since then our records form a continuous chain of ever-increasing strength. At that time was established a definite system which we can watch expand, decay and die out during five centuries, leaving relics that even now modify our lives. With the passing of the Middle Ages and the manorial system, modern economic history begins in the sixteenth century. Its central factor is competition, a struggle of each class in turn to get more than its equal share in the distribution of wealth, and a fight among the individuals within the class to do the same thing for themselves. This later story is one of rapid change, of the bursting of all fetters on individual effort till it culminates in the licence of the nineteenth century, when each man fought for his own hand. We start in the eleventh century in which no man is free to do that which he will with his own, and we end in the nineteenth with his almost absolute power to use it as he pleases.

There is another story, too, for we start with a people almost entirely ignorant of trade, made up of tiny self-sufficing communities, and we end with an island empire, the greatest trading community that history has known, no single portion of which can support itself alone, even for a short time.

At first you may find this sort of history difficult; it has new terms and, at the beginning, there seems no end to these; it lacks the nice definitions of great names, great battles, great laws, even of fixed dates. But if you will call on your imagination, if you will try to see the individual men and women at work in field, shop and factory, if you will think yourself back into the life described, whether as a great lord in his castle with ample food, fine robes, much dirt and little pocket money, or as a hardworking villein, very much of a slave, yet capable of standing for his rights, living like a pig but fighting and working like a man, I think you will find this side of our nation's story as fascinating and even as romantic as all our wars and pageants and great adventures. Life was quite as romantic to an Elizabethan apprentice as to Drake or Raleigh, the story of the Industrial Revolution is as tragic a mixture of enterprise and misery, idealism and utter selfishness, as that of the Crusades. Romance is not merely a gaudy cloak and a dashing mien, not even only gallant adventure or daring fight; there is romance in golden fields of corn; in perilous journeys by sea and land; in finding new worlds, not only across the seas, but in fresh arts for human skill; in discovering new means of controlling the forces of nature; in winning new lands by draining bogs instead of by killing men. In all that story of man's achievement with hand and brain

> 'By dock and deep and mine and mill
> The Boy-god reckless laboured still!'

BOOK I

From the Conquest to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century

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PART I

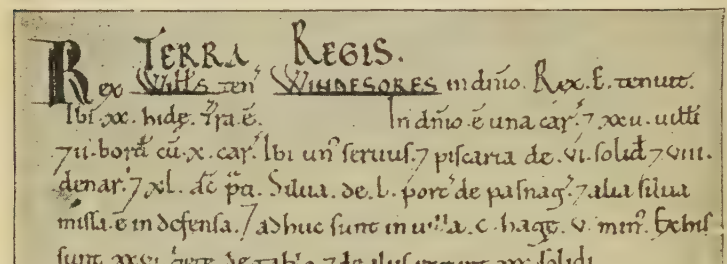
HOW MEN LIVED IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

1. The Village

Domesday Book. 'At midwinter in the year 1085 William the Conqueror wore his crown at Gloucester and there he had deep speech with his wise men.' It was nearly twenty years since Senlac had given to the Duke of Normandy and his following of barons, brigands and landless adventurers, the rich country, which, successively the prey of Roman, Saxon and Dane, had then changed hands for the last time. Now William and his wise men decided that the time had come to take stock of the booty. So he sent through all England his commissioners to every shire and hundred with orders to describe the kingdom on which he had entered. They went, and they called together men from every district and every village and wrote down what they learnt. Then clerks at head-quarters took the reports and re-arranged them so that the king might know, not only what land there was and what taxes it could pay, but who was responsible for the land to him, for according to Norman ideas all land must be held 'of' somebody, and finally of the king. Thus was made Domesday Book, as it came to be called, the first great survey of England, on which we depend mainly for our knowledge of the economics of the early Middle Ages.

Let us see exactly what the commissioners had to do. Here is one set of instructions:—'The King's barons inquired by oath of the sheriff of the shire and of all the barons and of their Frenchmen and of the whole hundred, the priest, reeve, and six villani of every vill, how the mansio is called, who held it in the time of King Edward, who holds it now, how many hides, how

many plough teams on the demesne, how many plough teams of the men, how many villani, how many cotarii, how many servi, how many liberi homines, how many sochemanni, how much wood, how much meadow, how much pasture, how many mills, how many fisheries, how much has been taken away therefrom, how much added thereto, and how much there is now, how much each liber homo and sochemannus had and has: all this thrice over, to wit as regards the time of King Edward, the time when King William gave it, and the present time, and whether more can be had thence than is had now.' These were the directions; let us take a look at the final report. This is what


TERRA REGIS.
Rex Wills ten' WINDESORES in dñio. Rex.E. tenuit.
Ibi .xx. hidæ. Tra.ē. In dñio ē una car' 7 xxu. uilli
7 u. bord' cū .x. car'. Ibi un' seruus. 7 piscaria de .vi. solid 7 xm.
denar. 7 xl. de pa. Silua. de .l. porc' de pasnag' 7 alia silua
missa ē in defensa. 7 adhuc sunt in uilla .c. hagæ. 7 mm' Exhs
sunt xxi. quæ de gabio, 7 de alis xl tenuit xx. solidi.

SPECIMEN OF DOMESDAY BOOK.

we find of the manor of Limenesfeld in Surrey: 'In demesne there are 5 teams and there are 25 villani and 6 bordarii with 14 teams. There is one mill of 2 shillings and one fishery and one church and 4 acres of meadow, and wood for 150 pannage pigs, and 2 stone quarries of 2 shillings and 2 nests of hawks in the wood and 10 servi'; or, if you prefer the original Latin, this of Fulham in Middlesex: 'In eadem villa tenent canonici S. Pauli de rege v hidas pro uno manerio. Terra est v carucis. Ad dominium pertinent iii hidae, et ibi sunt ii carucae. Villani ii carucas et tercia potest fieri. Ibi viii villani quisque de virgata, et vii villani quisque de dimidia virgata, et vii bordarii quisque de v acris.' Now what does all this mean, this talk of villani and bordarii, of demesne and mansio? It bears little resemblance to such a survey if

taken nowadays. What will a close study of Domesday Book, helped by such records as we have of earlier and later times, show us ?

England a Land of Villages. Something like this. In the eleventh century England was a land of ' vills '. A vill could be of more than one kind. It might be a village of some size, perhaps from 20 to 40 households, though 100 households are not unknown, and these nucleated villages had a special way of living that will be described in the next paragraph. But a vill could also be made up of several tiny hamlets of three or four households, or even of scattered homesteads, much more like our modern farms. The first kind is commonest in the east, midlands, and south, the two others become more frequent as we go west. Geography has something to do with it, though not all ; thus we find the scattered homesteads in the dales of Derbyshire, though other reasons would make us expect villages.

A typical Village of the South and Midlands. Could we re-visit an eleventh-century village of the south or middle of England, we should find something very unfamiliar. On either side of an irregular roadway would be cottages, whose appearance would suggest pig-styes or at least cattle-sheds, where in winter human beings and pigs and poultry lived and slept in happy ignorance of the laws of hygiene ; each of these cottages would be surrounded by a piece of land called a ' toft '. There would be a church, which was also the parish hall, where meetings took place and public business was done ; and a parsonage little or no better than the houses of the villagers. We should see a mill where the miller, who was usually credited with getting rich by cheating, lived better and warmer, but hardly cleaner, than his fellows, and a few huts even poorer and frailer than the majority, inhabited by men who, having little or no property, were slaves or little above them. Lastly, a little apart from the main group, we should find a larger building, built possibly of stone, with barns and storehouses and outlying sheds, obviously the property of some superior. This was the Hall where the Lord of the Manor lived from time to time or, if he were not a very great lord, always.

How did such a village live ? If we walked through the street we should presently come to large fields obviously cultivated,

A BALK OR DIVIDING STRIP, showing the Meerstone, Upton St. Leonards.

but looking very different from fields nowadays. There were no hedges round these fields, only at certain times of the year some temporary fencing. There would be either two or three very large fields and one of the three, in alternation, would be lying fallow, that is, it would be uncultivated and covered with

rough growth. The field, or fields, that were cultivated would look strange. They would be divided, not by hedges, but by narrow lengths of turf called balks, into strips, roughly a furlong long and 2 or 4 poles (or rods) wide. A furlong (220 yards) is really a ' furrow long ', the straight distance before the plough turns and rests to let the oxen breathe. The pole varied, but

THE LYNCHES AT UPTON ST. LEONARDS, looking north-east.

was usually 5½ yards long, and a breadth of four of these gave an acre, the amount one team of oxen could usually plough in a day ending at noon. Sometimes when the strips lay on a hill slope the balks were called *lynches*. On the slope the plough turned the soil downhill and in time the sloping strips became flat terraces. The lynches were then steep banks, frequently covered with bushes. Each of these strips belonged to one of the villagers, and he would possess either fifteen or thirty of them scattered about all over the fields, no two being together. What-

ever number he held would be evenly divided among the two or three fields. A holding of thirty acre strips was usually called a virgate, and the man who owned it was called a villanus (villein). How he cultivated it we shall see later.

Most of the men of the village were villani, but there were others both poorer and richer. Below the villani were the bordarii (bordars) and the cotarii (cotters). The bordars sometimes held strips in the common fields, the cotters never; the main property of both was some 3 to 5 acres near their cottages. Above the villeins were free men and socmen, and finally the lord. The free men and the socmen held land among the strips and lived much as the villeins as far as their own land was concerned, but their relation to their 'lord' was different. How did the lord live? He usually had a good deal of land in the village, it might be strips among the others, or it might be enclosed land lying round the Hall like a modern home farm, but wherever it lay it was called the lord's 'demesne'. How did he cultivate it? Not with his own labour and that of his family, as the villeins and many of the socmen and freemen did. Did he employ labourers as a modern landowner would? Not exactly in the same way. The villeins, bordars, and cotters held their land by a *labour rent*. In return for it they had to work for the lord on *his* land, so many days a week (called week-work) and for so many days extra at special times like harvest (called boon-work). Bordars and cotters did the same. The freemen and the socmen did not do week-work, though occasionally we find men called socmen doing it, but they too helped the lord in boon-work. Last of all there was a certain number of slaves who worked for the lord and were his absolutely.

Tenure of the Land. Before we inquire how the land was worked and what sort of profit was made out of it, we ought to get some idea of the rights each of these classes had in it, because it makes a good deal of difference in a country, who owns the land and what he can do with it. Now Domesday Book shows us many different kinds of tenures and we have a shrewd suspicion that it hides behind its Latin names a still greater variety. The Normans were used to a system by which everybody held

land ' de ' somebody else, and they found in England something very like, often exactly like, what they were used to. But they also found many cases that did not fit in at all with this Norman custom and sometimes they mention it, but frequently there is little doubt they twisted it round and labelled it with the terms they knew, which were often a very bad fit. But in a great many cases it would be correct to say that the Norman theory was true in fact, if not in name. A villein held his land ' of ' his lord and therefore in a sense it was his lord's land, and the villein could neither sell nor give it away; on the other hand, it is doubtful if the lord could eject him as long as he performed his services. The villein's land was hereditary, and yet the heir had to secure his lord's consent to his succession and to pay a fine on getting it. In fact the villein's legal rights were vague, but custom secured him a very real interest in his holding and economic factors combined to tie him to it. The lord wanted to keep him because of his labour on the demesne, the villein had no desire, as yet, to leave the land which was his only means of subsistence. The holdings of freemen and socmen were in a sense also held ' of ' the lord; they formed part of the organization which, as a whole, was called the Manor, but the freemen could leave or sell their land and it passed to the heir without leave or licence from the lord. The position of socmen varied; sometimes they seem as free as the liberi homines, sometimes they are little better off than the villani. Probably in the eleventh century their exact position was uncertain; we shall see in the thirteenth century, after the lawyers had got to work, what happened to it. One of the differences between the freeman and the villein is that the former is fold-worthy, i.e. he has the right to fold his sheep where he will. The villein was obliged to fold his in the lord's demesne. The value of this to the lord was great, as the manure of sheep was the chief available enrichment of the soil. The right, therefore, to use his own sheep on his own land was greatly treasured by freeman and socman, and was frequently a test of his status. A village, such as the above, bears a strong resemblance to the very definite organization

known as the manor, which will be described in Part II, dealing with the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and indeed Domesday Book divides all England into 'manors', and a great many of them appear in the above form.

Various sorts of Villages. But the villein holding his land by labour services from a lord, with labourers and slaves below him and a few freemen above and partially outside the manor, is not the only type we find.

(i) In the eastern counties, where the Danish immigration was but some two centuries old, we find groups of freemen holding villages of their own. Also where the manorial organization is present, with lord, demesne and villeins, we find freemen standing outside it, for 'they could take their land to whom they would', i.e. they had a lord to whom they had 'commended' themselves, but they could change him if they pleased. As we go westward the number of freemen and socmen decreases.

(ii) On the other hand, we find a manor that was all demesne, i.e. a mere lord's estate cultivated by unfree labourers.

(iii) The manorial organization of a lot of scattered hamlets or small farms must have been loose, and produce-rents often took the place of labour-rent. It would not pay, even if it were possible, to cultivate an estate by labourers who had to walk miles to get to their work.

But while Domesday Book shows us this great variety of villages, though it also shows us how they were tending to take on one special form, which reaches its perfection about a century later, it does show us a common basis and resemblance. Leaving therefore for the time the legal questions that surround the status of the villein, the socman, and the slave, let us look merely at the economic situation.

The Isolation of the Village. The first contrast to our own times that strikes us is that the village was self-sufficing. It produced nearly all it wanted. In those fields divided into strips was growing the corn needful for food and drink; on them in the autumn and on the waste land in the summer pastured the oxen that drew the plough, and the sheep that supplied the wool

for clothing, while for nine months in the year the woods and waste harboured the pig, that general utility animal, whose flesh formed the principal food and whose hide and bristles and fat were all valuable. Wood came from the woods and waste commons round the village, the right to use which went with the villein's strips in the field. Just a few things were needed from outside, iron for the blacksmith to turn into horse-shoes, ploughshares, sickles and knives, salt to keep the meat through the long winter months, and mill-stones to grind the corn. Even the smallest village nowadays has its grocer's shop, but in William's day the markets were few and far between and roads impassable for six months of the year. Thus the villagers had to feed and clothe themselves out of the produce of their land, though they did not know a great deal about ways of doing it.

A FORGE

Eleventh-century Farming. Since the eighteenth century, farmers have learnt how to make the land produce more, by a rotation of crops so arranged that each crop uses up different things from the soil in turn and so leaves time for each constituent of the soil to recover itself. Especially useful for this purpose are crops of roots, like turnips. Our ancestors of the eleventh century knew little of this beyond the fact that it did not pay to grow wheat on the same ground two years following. So they cultivated the land on what is known as the three-field system, or often on the two-field. On this plan the arable land was divided into three fields: one was sown with wheat or rye, one with barley or oats or peas and beans, and the third was left fallow. Next year the wheat-field would have barley, the

barley one be left fallow, and the fallow one ploughed and sown with wheat.

	1st year.	2nd year.	3rd year.
I.	Wheat.	Barley.	Fallow.
II.	Barley.	Fallow.	Wheat.
III.	Fallow.	Wheat.	Barley.

On a two-field system half the land would be left fallow and the other half sown, partly with wheat and partly with barley. The wheat gave them bread, though rye was also largely used; the barley gave malt for their ale, of which they required a good deal, each man drinking from a gallon to three gallons a day. The ale had no hops in it till the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Farm Stock. But farming requires stock; what stock had the villein of the eleventh century? First and most important were his oxen. The plough of this date was a clumsy heavy wooden affair with an iron tip and was usually drawn by eight oxen. An ordinary villein, holding a virgate (usually 30 acres) of land, was not rich enough to keep eight oxen, he possibly had two. He joined up with three others to make the full team and thus ploughed his strips in his turn. The lord usually had his own plough-teams on the demesne, but the villein lent his oxen as well along with his services. The villager fed his oxen partly on the common waste land, partly on the stubble of the arable after the crops were gathered when the fencing was taken down, and partly on the meadows. These meadows were the most valuable part of the village and were fenced in and hay was grown on them. They too were divided into strips and these strips with the hay growing on them were distributed, often by lot, among the holders of arable land. Besides his oxen the villein might have a few sheep and a cow or so, together with pigs, fowls, geese, and ducks, all of which picked up a precarious living on the waste. This waste was very extensive; Domesday Book shows a very large area of it apart from Yorkshire, which it will be remembered had been harried by William in 1068, and did not recover in a century. There was also the great

PLOUGHING

fen district, besides large heaths in Surrey and other counties. Other causes of large wastes may have been the inroads of lawless raiders and pirates, the devastations of the King's Host, castle-building, and general extortion. But apart from all these, each village was surrounded by common waste land and its rights in it were jealously guarded. For it is not too much to say that without this uncultivated land the villager could not have lived. From it he drew wood for building, for fencing, for fuel, turf also for this last, while on it lived much of his stock. In the winter he could only depend on his hay with some peas and beans for fodder, so autumn saw a great slaughter of stock, which was salted down for winter use. The few cattle that survived to the spring did so in a very poor half-starved condition, and a prolonged winter might reduce the smaller villeins to ruin.

This peculiar system of 'open-field' agriculture had many disadvantages, the chief being the difficulty of improving the farming and making experiments. All had to farm in exactly the same way, the sowing, ploughing and reaping all depended on several persons combining to work together, while the ground was manured chiefly by pasturing the village stock over it indiscriminately. It was no use for one farmer to 'clean' his land, that is clear it of weeds, if his neighbours of the next strips neglected theirs, the weeds upon which would soon seed over the land of the more energetic worker. Its advantages were considerable, however, in a primitive society, where fighting was often necessary and the man away on military service could depend on his neighbours to keep the land cultivated. The reason for the strips has been much debated, but it seems probable that the object was fairness, so that each man should get his share of good and bad land. There was also convenience so that each man's land got ploughed in turn.

Origin of the Manor. How did the system outlined above come about? Is it complete or nearly complete in the time of Domesday Book? These two questions have raised a great controversy among historians and even now are not conclusively answered.

(1) The first theory (for the history of western Europe from A. D. 450–600 must unfortunately be largely guess-work) is that the Anglo-Saxon settlers drove out the Romanized or partially Romanized Briton, entirely from Eastern and Southern Britain, and to a very large extent from the west, until they were stopped by the mountain fastnesses of Wales and Devon and Cumberland. It is supposed that on the new land thus cleared the Anglo-Saxons settled in village communities of free men, each holding land enough to keep him and his household; that often these villages were inhabited entirely by men of one kin, that the suffix 'ing' in place-names indicates such a colony of relatives, and that such slaves as there were were men captured in battle, the new-comers being all free men who bowed to none. Gradually, however, this equality disappeared; men rose to wealth and honour, either by service with the King in his many wars, often rewarded by special grants of extra land, or by the acceptance of collective responsibilities such as collecting the taxes from the rest of the village, which saved the other villagers trouble, while they forgot that it gave the collector power. In all sorts of ways during 600 years, more than half of which were times of constant fighting, surely and slowly arose an aristocracy of war or of service. Large grants of land to monastic and other ecclesiastical bodies helped in the same direction. Monks and nuns might be humble individuals, but a community of them with a royal princess as Abbess at their head was likely to be a powerful landholder upsetting the balance of any village community. The Abbeys were among the best farmers, and they took ideas from Rome rather than from the heathen customs of their race. Hence by the time the Danes arrived, something very like a manor was taking the place of the English vill and transforming the free cultivator into something not far removed from a serf.

The Danish settlement upset this tendency for a time and studded the eastern counties with villages of free men, free in a sense in which the ceorl of Saxon days, the villanus of Domesday Book, was ceasing to be, though it must not be forgotten

that the villein of the eleventh century was reckoned a free man in personal status, having a wer-gild of £4, if any one killed him, that of a slave being 40*d*. We also find that the villein, unlike a slave, could be a member of a court and a witness; he possessed arms and paid taxes. The freemen and socmen of the Danish counties, their vills with no lord, suggest that originally Anglo-Saxon immigrants had started with free villages and that inequalities of status were of later growth. Domesday Book shows us in Lincoln, Norfolk, and Suffolk the freest population, the most prosperous and the densest, while freedom, prosperity, and density decrease as we go westward. So much for the theory of the free village community.

(2) Forty years ago this was the accepted history of our nation. But since then the version has been strongly attacked by certain French scholars, who maintain that the free 'mark' inhabited by men of free birth and equal standing is a figment of Teutonic imagination, and they have been supported by some English historians of weight. The rival theory is roughly this:— That the Anglo-Saxons did not clear the land of British, that they found here the highly organized Roman system of a 'villa' owned by a lord and cultivated by 'coloni', men tied to the soil, holding their land by tenure of services in cultivating the lord's demesne, and that the Anglo-Saxons merely displaced, or occupied the vacant places of the Roman lords, and kept on the British as serfs tied to the soil; thus you would have the manorial system at once.

Which of these theories has the greater probability? On the whole the balance is in favour of the free community for, at least, the tract of country from Durham to the English Channel and between the Severn and a line from the Chilterns to the Wash. It is difficult on the other theory to account for the total disappearance of the language of the conquered race—hardly any Celtic words have survived into modern English, while in Gaul, where something like the second version did take place, the language has remained Romance and Celtic. Also Domesday Book shows us that the free village community existed

among the Danish invaders and was imposed by them on the counties they occupied; it seems likely that their Anglo-Saxon cousins had done much the same five centuries before. The two- and three-field system was also characteristic later on of that district between the Elbe and the Weser, whence our English ancestors came. But it is likely also that the history of Western England was somewhat different. The comparative absence of freemen and the large increase in the number of slaves (there were some 24 per cent. in Gloucestershire and none in Lincolnshire) suggest that Roman, or more probably Celtic, influences survived there and profoundly modified the customs of the Anglo-Saxons. It is probable that the variety of the eleventh century was not produced by any one tendency, but by an equilibrium of opposing forces. The two- and three-field systems described above are only to be found in the centre of England. Trace a line from Durham through mid-Yorkshire east of the Pennines, skirting the Peak and southern Cheshire to the Welsh border, thence south to Monmouthshire and south-east to Gloucester, along the coast to the Quantock Hills and south-east to Weymouth—this is the western boundary of the two- and three-field system. For the eastern we have a twisting line from Boston skirting the fens round the Wash to the borders of Suffolk, along the Chiltern heights to the Thames above Reading, south to the borders of Sussex and along the chalk downs to Beachy Head. It is a large area but it is not all England. North and west and south-west of it are mountain lands where Celtic Britain stood at bay and where the conquerors were quite unable to exterminate their predecessors. There, in Cumberland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Wales, Devon and Cornwall, the agricultural systems that prevailed have left traces showing a system very different from the typical plans of the central district and with strong likenesses to those of Scotland and Ireland. Large nucleated villages give place to small hamlets of less than ten families, holdings are not arranged in two or three large fields, and traces exist of *runrig*, a system by which constant subdivision and re-distribution were made. To the east in Kent,

Essex and East Anglia a different arrangement is discoverable, bearing strong resemblances to the Roman villa and suggesting that, whatever may have happened in Mercia and Wessex, in these eastern counties Rome was not utterly obliterated.

Effect of the Norman Conquest. What was the effect of the Norman Conquest on the organizations of the country? Domesday Book supplies a partial answer. The rule of the Norman kings was before all else a strong rule—a rule that would have order in the kingdom at all costs. Consequently, since officials find uniformity much easier to administer than diversity, the tendency was to compress the social organism into one mould, the manor. The result of this is seen in:

(*a*) The disappearance of the small free farmer who did not hold his land by military service. He found it more and more difficult to distinguish himself from the ordinary villein, who in his turn was being depressed towards slavery. In Cambridgeshire there were 900 socmen in the time of Edward the Confessor and only 200 in 1086. Domesday Book itself helped in the same direction. Many freemen held land by service tenure, and Domesday Book tends to rank a man not by his birth, but by the terms on which he held his land.

(*b*) The slave almost disappeared as the result of the Norman Conquest. He probably became absorbed in the class of cotters, which increased in numbers. The reason here was probably economy—it paid better to give a slave a house and a piece of ground and tell him to keep himself, than to feed and clothe him. In return for this little piece of ground the lord probably got nearly as much work as before and of a good bit better quality.

(*c*) The villein, who was a freeman with very definite customary rights before the Conquest, lost much of his status. His wer-gild, which ranked him as a freeman, ceased to be of importance, when murder was no longer atoned for by money. His Norman lord was likely to listen little to the rights of one whom he regarded as a member of a conquered race. Thus many causes combined to make the Norman villein a much less 'law-worthy' person than his ancestor the Anglo-Saxon ceorl. What the

culmination of the tendencies was to which the Norman Conquest gave a strong fresh impetus, we shall see in the twelfth century. Meanwhile, the villager lived his life much as before, growing his food and clothing, with subsistence enough, if coarse and monotonous, not greatly caring whether William or Edward ruled the country, awaking occasionally to grumble at perhaps a stronger hand and more exacting rule from his lord, or to bitter complaint when the new king's passion for hunting swept away him and his land and his rights, to enclose a forest for the royal pleasure. Except during the anarchy of Stephen's reign, when the lords built castles and filled them with 'devils and wicked men', the village economy went on much as usual for another century.

Women. It is thought that the Anglo-Saxons did not originally allow women to hold land, only movable property like furniture. There is, however, no evidence on the point, and very early we find them in possession of land. Professor Vinogradoff thinks this change arose in connexion with boc-land, which was land granted to individuals by special charter from the king and the transaction recorded on parchment. This custom arose chiefly in grants to the church, but spread to other holders, among whom we find women. At the time of the Conquest Royal Ladies held large estates all over the country, and holdings by women of all classes appear in Domesday Book. An especially interesting case is that of one Asa, who is stated to have held land separately from her husband and free of his control, and to have taken her land with her when she separated from him; on her death it was granted to her heir and not to her husband.

When a woman held land, in whatever rank (and we find her doing so as tenant-in-chief down every grade to the smallest villein), she performed its services, in the higher ranks often though not always by proxy, in the lower there is little doubt she carried them through in person. The Norman Conquest, by the bias of the conquerors towards primogeniture, tended to lower the status of women, though the constant wars and feuds often depleted a family of its male heirs in three generations.

Then the estates fell to a woman, and with them all the numerous and onerous public burdens attached. The heiress performed these duties and we find her doing homage and also receiving it in person. Prior to 1268 women did suit of court, i.e. attended the court as assessors, in person, for in that year we find the Statute of Marlborough excusing them attendance at the Sheriff's 'Turn'.

Among the villeins and smaller freemen, the widow frequently took up the holding and performed the duties. Sometimes women held land jointly with their husbands, in which case the survivor continued to hold it till death. Times later than the eleventh century show us women occupying all the village offices: e. g. constable, overseer, pinder (keeper of the pound for straying animals), and reeve.[1] There is no reason to suppose they did not do so at the earlier date. Most important of all, by Common Law a woman had her right of dower, which remained to her till 1833. This was usually one-third, though it might be one-half of her husband's estate. Of the actual work done by women we have little evidence before the end of the twelfth century, so a description of this side of their economic position will be left to the second part of this book.

Summary. Let us sum up our knowledge of eleventh-century England:

1. It was a land of villages, which lived largely by a system of agriculture known as the open-field system, and each village supplied nearly all its own wants.

2. The land was officially divided into manors, most of them perhaps coinciding with the vills, but not always so. A fully developed manor was controlled by a lord, who held a considerable part of the land in demesne. This demesne was cultivated by the villagers, each working so many days a week, and in return they had land of their own, which they cultivated with the help of their neighbours. But in the eleventh century the manors were not completely organized, and were often different from this standard pattern.

[1] See p. 38.

3. We find besides the lord, some six classes of men: freemen, socmen, villeins, bordars, cotters, and slaves.

4. The Norman Conquest tended to depress the condition of the ordinary villager, to make freemen and socmen diminish in numbers and the villein less free. It, however, nearly abolished the lowest class of slaves, who became cotters.

5. Women when they held land had exactly the same economic position as men, but the Norman Conquest tended to prevent them holding land, and by the feudal customs of wardship and marriage [1] to lower their personal status.

2. Towns and Trade

We said in the last chapter that England in the eleventh century was a land of villages, and this was true, but we must not therefore suppose that there were no towns whatever. Domesday Book, which as we have seen is our chief authority, enumerates some hundred boroughs besides several market-towns not called boroughs. Rutland and Cornwall indeed seem the only counties without boroughs, and Cornwall had five market-towns. In the eleventh century London was, as now, the chief city; next in order came Winchester, Bristol, Norwich, York, and Lincoln, none of them numbering more than 7,000 to 8,000 inhabitants. Indeed, most of the boroughs and towns were little more than overgrown villages, places where for one reason or another different types of people had come to live and trade and where industry had as a consequence sprung up. A large part of their population continued to live by agriculture, and villeins and bordars appear in a Domesday Book town just as they do in a rural vill. But besides these there were others who, though they held a little land, certainly did not live by it, their occupation and livelihood depending on industry or trade, or more often on both. They were called burgesses and they had special duties and special rights. The burgess was usually

[1] See p. 27.

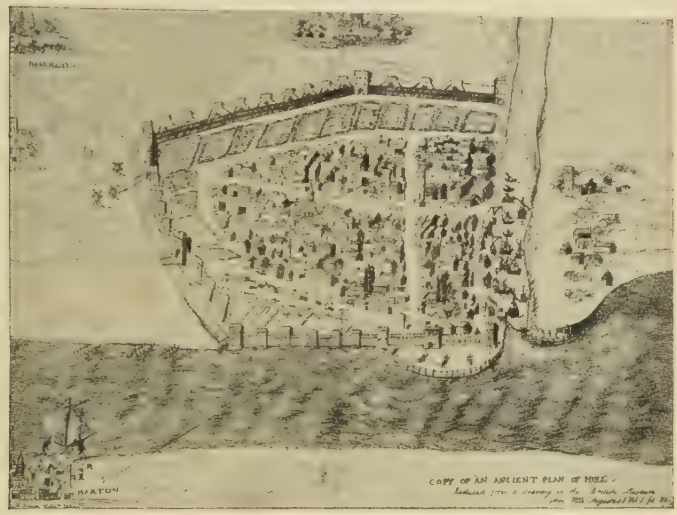
a freeman, but not always, for in Ipswich we find one who was a slave.

Origin of the Towns. How came these towns to exist ?

1. The Town as Stronghold. We know that when Rome withdrew her protecting legions in the fifth century she left behind her many a flourishing trading city and fortified stronghold, for we can to-day still see the walls she built around them. But the Anglo-Saxons hated cities, they loved a free open-air life, and, in the main, they stayed outside and left the fine old towns to fall to ruin. Exeter almost alone of all our towns has a continuous history from Roman days to ours, and that is because the Saxons did not conquer it till a late date, when they had learnt the use of a walled city. For a time came when the need for defence against each other, and later against marauding Danes, made the old walls a valuable refuge, and we even find the Saxons founding towns, as Ine did Taunton in A. D. 710, or the Lady of Mercia, two centuries later, the great fortified burghs of the midlands. By the eleventh century there are one or more fortified towns in every county, and there seems some reason to think that they were the result of a deliberate policy, for many country estates had a house in a neighbouring town and on that house fell the duty of helping to repair the city walls. This suggests that these towns were a sort of refuge for the county, and the duty of garrisoning them and repairing the walls was laid on the rural estates for that reason. In one case a town house was given to a nunnery explicitly as a place of refuge.

2. The Town as Trading Centre. But the main cause of the growth of towns was, then as now, trade. Thus we find them on the main trade routes, at cross-roads as Aylesbury, on river crossings as Oxford, by harbours as Bristol or Southampton, near important fisheries as Gloucester and Yarmouth, or, like St. Albans, Bury St. Edmunds, or the Welsh border towns, sheltered in the shadow of churches, monasteries, and castles, places that brought together travellers of all kinds, out of whom the enterprising trader could win a living. The Danes were great traders and their conquest of the country largely increased the number of towns.

Organization of the Eleventh-century Borough. (1) Where the borough was part of a lord's estate it differed little from any other township. The burgesses paid other dues than labour on the lord's demesne, but whatever they paid they paid to him, and he was their lord, just as he was to his rural tenants. He was said to 'hold' the borough.



A WALLED TOWN. An early plan of Hull.

(2) But there were boroughs that did not belong to any one lord, and to a certain extent the burgesses of such boroughs managed their own affairs. The king's dues and rents were collected by the prepositus or reeve and handed over to the official who farmed them. For the king usually rented his dues for a fixed sum to some one, who took his chance of getting less or possibly more from the burgesses. This farmer of the king's dues was often the sheriff of the county, though, even at this early period, we find one town itself farming its rents and dues direct from the king; this precocious town was Northampton. The Reeve of the town was its leader, but he was subordinate to

the sheriff of the county, except in London, where he seems to have taken the place of the sheriff, as if London were a county.

There are one or two instances in Domesday Book of towns holding common property, e. g. Exeter and Colchester, but as yet it was rare. The town had its own court for settlement of disputes and for minor criminal offences, and it is generally supposed to have been free from obligation to attend the hundred court. The fines went to the king and the earl of the county, except in cases of offence in the houses of certain burgesses who held jurisdiction over their own houses and their tenants.

Most boroughs had a mint; 26 such are mentioned in Domesday Book, Hereford having as many as 7. In the tenth century London had 8 and Winchester 6.

The Rights and Duties of Eleventh-century Burgesses. The burgesses had usually got rid of agricultural services, but they did not thereby escape service of all kinds.

(*a*) They paid rent, either in money or produce. They had to a large extent commuted produce rents for money, but under Edward the Confessor they had paid such various commodities as honey, furs, corn, herrings, salt, goat-skins or hides, a hawk, a mantle, a bear and six dogs to bait it. One feels that it is to the credit of the Conqueror that he substituted a race-horse for these last.

(*b*) Boroughs had to provide so many men for military service, or, in the case of ports, for sea-service. Another due sometimes levied was horses for the king's journey.

(*c*) A few agricultural services survived, especially boon-work at harvest time, but above all suit of mill, i. e. the duty of carrying all grain to be ground at the lord's mill. Manchester did not free itself from this feudal due till the eighteenth century, and only finally shook off the pressure of its overlord by the middle of the nineteenth.

Such were the duties of the burgesses; what of their privileges?

(*a*) As we have seen, they were exempt from most of the labour services exacted from rural tenants.

(*b*) Their main privilege, however, was the right to sell their holding without obtaining a licence. This was common but not universal.

Apart from these two privileges there does not seem at this period to be a great deal of difference between town and country, but in the next chapter we shall see how the towns wrested more and more liberty from their overlords, while the wealth of increasing trade and the habit of living in a close community enabled them to combine in a way impossible to the more fettered and scattered rural population.

Markets and Fairs. Probably every town had a market. This was a fixed place where men could buy and sell openly and before all, and where alone they were allowed to do so. All Anglo-Saxon and mediaeval kings tried their utmost to control the channels of trade, for two reasons :—

(*a*) To prevent traffic in stolen goods. If a man could only sell in open market and in the presence of witnesses there was a better chance of detecting stolen property. Also in an age when writers and documents were scarce, the word of an eye-witness was the only evidence for sale. Property sold thus in the authorized place and before witnesses remained with the buyer, even if it afterwards was proved to have been stolen.

(*b*) To make sure that the king got his tolls, for no small part of his revenue was from trading tolls. If things were bought and sold in secret he thereby lost revenue.

But a third reason existed for authorized markets. The whole idea of the age was towards a monopoly of trade, and we shall see in the next century how anxiously the traders worked to keep it in the hands of certain licensed people. The idea that it was good for the nation to have unlimited competition would have seemed to them the utterance of a madman, and would have roused an outcry from every class of society. But if trade was to be in the hands of the few, then it must take place openly, so that illicit traders could be detected and ousted. So for centuries the market was the trading place of the district. At these markets could be bought by the townsman and villager

such few things as he himself did not produce, and the villager sometimes disposed of his surplus produce and took in exchange the articles manufactured by the townsman.

But while the weekly market supplied the simple needs of the district, there was, even in the eleventh century, a demand for luxuries and expensive necessaries on the part of richer men, that had to be met. These were provided by the fairs, of which only two are mentioned in Domesday Book. They were many and important by the end of two centuries more. These fairs were markets on a large scale specially licensed, generally for the time of a church festival, and to them came merchants from all parts bringing rare and costly goods, as well as ordinary articles in general use. We shall hear much of them in the next period of our history.

Trade in the Eleventh Century. At the time of the Conquest England had considerable trade, chiefly in luxuries. Both the Anglo-Saxon and the Dane held trade in honour and as early as the eighth century we hear of an English merchant at Marseilles, while, in the ninth, Offa, King of Mercia, was negotiating protection for English merchants from Charlemagne. There was, too, much intercourse with Rome and with monasteries on the Continent, with considerable letter-carrying to and fro. The Danes were traders even more than they were pirates, though they found a combination of both very successful, and to the merchant who had made three voyages in his own ship was given the rank of thegn.

By the end of the eleventh century there were three chief trade routes :

1. With France and Flanders from London, Southampton, Sandwich, Dover, and the Kentish ports generally.

2. A slave trade from Chester and Bristol to the Danes in Ireland.

3. From London, Grimsby, Lincoln, Norwich and Ipswich via Scandinavia and Russia to the East.

The trade consisted mainly of luxuries such as ' purple cloth, silk, gems and gold, garments, pigments, wine, oil, ivory, brass,

copper, tin, sulphur, glass and such like'. The merchants were mostly foreigners, for Englishmen had largely lost the trick of seafaring and it was some time before English trade was carried on in English ships.

Industries. The industries of England at this period were not numerous. As we have seen, most things the villager used he made himself, and only in the towns, where dwelt not 10 per cent. of the population, did a man live by craft. Among the manufactures which existed the chief were, tin (in Devon), lead (chiefly in Derbyshire), iron (in Gloucester, Hereford, Sussex and Cheshire), and salt at Droitwich. We also hear of potters and smiths, leatherworkers and shoemakers. It seems strange to think of iron in rural districts, for now we associate its manufacture with the coal areas of the north and midlands. But coal was little used and not at all for smelting, so the neighbourhood of forests was essential to produce the charcoal that was used for fuel.

Effect of the Norman Conquest on the Towns. The immediate effect seems to have been the destruction of many houses to make room for the castle, but they appear to have recovered quickly and to have prospered. The strong rule of the Norman kings gave a peace and order very favourable to trade and industry, and the kings encouraged the towns in every way. Besides this there was a large influx of aliens immediately after the Conquest, an influx consisting chiefly of traders and artisans. These gave a fresh impulse to industry and commerce, and, as we shall see in the next two centuries, prosperity produced liberty, which spreading from town to nation laid broadly the foundations of that peculiar thing called English freedom.

Summary. 1. Although England at the time of the Conquest was mainly an agricultural country, still some hundred or so towns did exist, and already showed signs of coming independence.

2. Trade went on at markets and fairs. At the former the trade was in the commodities of the district, in the latter the imported luxuries of the age were gathered and sold.

3. Overseas trade in the eleventh century was mainly in the hands of foreigners and in foreign ships, Englishmen having deteriorated in enterprise since the ninth century.

4. Industries were few and, so far, little organized.

3. The King's Revenue. The Army

We have seen now how the ordinary folk of the land got their living, our next inquiry must be how were the expenses of government met? Now to understand the attitude of the men of the early Middle Ages towards taxation we must get rid of several modern ideas that seem to us quite natural and essential, but which are really the result of growth and development. We pay taxes now to meet the expenses of the whole complicated system of government, and every year Parliament decrees how much those taxes shall be and on what objects they are to be spent. If something new has to be done by the State, then Parliament votes fresh money for that particular purpose, as when in 1870 the Government decided to carry on at the public expense the education of the nation. Or suppose it was decided that henceforth the shipping of the country or the railways or the beer should be State property, then Parliament might vote the necessary millions to buy out the existing owners. But in the eleventh century no such ideas existed. It was the king's business to govern and it was also his business to find the money, not come to ordinary people for it. Nothing was more definite in most peoples' minds than that 'the king should live of his own'. For his household, for his court, even for his soldiers often, he and he alone must find the means. Obviously then we must ask what had the king of his own by which to live? We shall find it was no small property.

The Royal Demesne. First and largest of his resources came the demesne lands of the Crown, which by 1086 included not only the 'ancient demesne' of Edward Confessor, but all the enormous additions that had fallen to William by confiscation from rebellious subjects. Domesday Book gives 1,422 royal manors,

besides farms and lands in Middlesex, Shropshire, and Rutland. On the demesne were forest-lands where the king hunted and whence he drew supplies of venison for his household. From the rural villages he drew the actual food on which he lived, corn and ale, meat and poultry, milk, cheese, pigeons, geese and swans. Like any other great lord, he and his household consumed much of this by moving from manor to manor. But while a lord even of a hundred manors might manage so to use their produce, it is evident that in quite early times there must have been lands of his own that the king never saw, and quite early too it must have proved easier to sell the produce and send the king the money. The cost of entertaining the king for a night, known as a night's 'farm', was estimated at from £80 to £100. Such money was collected by the sheriff and sent to the king. In the towns on the royal demesne money-rents soon took the place of produce, and as it was easier to collect money from townspeople living close together than from scattered villages, where often money could not be had and hens or pigs had to be accepted, we find the towns complaining they had to pay more than their share. They secured very soon a separate assessment, and later they bought leave to collect it themselves.

Feudal Dues. While the produce of the royal lands supplied the king with the ordinary needs of existence, we must also remember he was the greatest feudal lord in the land, and the incidents of feudal tenure were very profitable. The chief were:—

1. AIDS. These were special grants of money from his tenants-in-chief for three particular occasions, viz. knighting his eldest son, marrying his eldest daughter, and ransoming his person in case of capture.

2. WARDSHIP AND MARRIAGE. By these rights he secured:

(*a*) The administration of the lands of heirs and heiresses under age. The profits were large.

(*b*) The right to marry an heiress to whom he would. This right he often sold for a good round sum.

3. RELIEFS. Sums paid by an heir on taking up his estate; at first indefinite in amount, they later became fixed.

4. Primer Seisin. The right to the first year's revenue after the death of a tenant. This right eventually belonged to the king alone.

All these four incidents were of great value, and unscrupulous kings like John made a lot of money in that way. Marriages in particular were valuable. They varied in cost, the highest recorded is that of Isabel, Countess of Gloucester, in Henry III's reign, for which Geoffrey de Mandeville paid 20,000 marks.

5. Escheat. By this lands without an heir went to the king.

Profits of Jurisdiction. The mediaeval idea of jurisdiction was inextricably mixed up with money. Indeed, it has been well said that 'mediaeval justice was mostly finance, though mediaeval finance was not always justice'. Among the early German races, with whom pecuniary punishments were universal, the idea was general that two indemnities were due, the *bot* or payment to the injured and the *wite* or payment to the king or whoever held the jurisdiction. It was thought only fair that he who took the trouble to decide the case and maintain the law should be paid for his work. By the eleventh century a good deal of private jurisdiction had arisen and the king had granted away many of his rights to others, but in all such grants there were some pleas always reserved for the Crown. They vary usually from three to six. The six were: housebreaking, breach of the king's peace, highway robbery, murder, entertaining an outlaw, and adultery.

Other Sources of Revenue. There were several other smaller items, rather of the nature of windfalls, in the royal revenue; some of them exist to-day. Such were *waifs* or goods thrown away by the thief in his flight, *strayed animals* with no owner, *wreck*, *whales* and *great sturgeons*, *treasure trove*. To these may be added two others that do not appear till the next century, but may be mentioned here for the sake of completion:

(*a*) Payment by the towns for liberties and charters.

(*b*) Payment for grants of fairs and markets.

Danegeld. This was the only due in the eleventh century that we should call a direct tax. It originated in the tenth century

as money to buy off the Danes, and was organized later by Canute as a national tax. Originally it was only levied for special occasions, but later regularly on every 'hide' of land. Hence it was eventually known as hidage and carucage. It was for the proper assessment of this tax that William caused the Domesday survey to be made. The royal demesne usually escaped this geld, since it had to supply the king's farm.

Purveyance and Pre-emption. Two other rights of the king helped to increase his income in fact if not in cash. Purveyance, the right to impress conveyances and horses for the king's use, and pre-emption, the right to buy supplies at a fixed and usually a low price; both these were a heavy burden on the districts in which the king stayed or through which he moved. Allied to these was PRISAGE, the right to one or two casks from each ship bringing wine to England. There were some few other trading tolls or customs, among them probably an export duty on wool.

The Army. Before the Conquest there were several sources from which the kings drew an army.

1. There was the FYRD or general levy of all able-bodied men in the kingdom. Sometimes it included every possible man led by the parochial priests; this was for home defence and was called out as late as the Battle of the Standard, 1138. More often it consisted of a representative from every household in the kingdom. It was an unwieldy host, very difficult to feed and to maintain at any decent level of equipment. It remained a possible source of power down to modern times and was the ancestor of the militia.

2. The Saxon and Danish kings had a body of HUSCARLES. These were picked professional soldiers and formed the royal bodyguard, but were also the centre and most important part of any army collected. They were well paid and lived at the king's expense.

3. There were also MERCENARIES hired by the kings either for special occasions or for permanent defence. The Saxon and Danish navies were of this kind.

After the Conquest, when the military tenure of lands became more definite, the fyrd sank to an unimportant place, the huscarles ceased to exist, and the feudal host of heavily armed knights replaced them. Mercenaries were not unknown, but were difficult to maintain since coin was scarce. Often the forty-days knight's service which feudal tenants had to give at their own cost was extended and payment made by the king. There was no difficulty in getting soldiers, for every great lord's house had

SAXON FOOTMEN AND NORMAN CAVALRY

a number of knights and sergeants and squires who spent their time between warlike exercises and the delights of hunting. They held little or no land, and lived at the expense of their lord, ready to follow his banner at any moment. On the borders of Wales and Scotland they were, of course, particularly numerous.

Summary. 1. In the eleventh century there was no national income at the disposal of the Government. The king was expected to govern and to pay the cost out of his own possessions, like any other feudal lord. 'The king shall live of his own.' As, however, he was the greatest landowner in the country, the royal demesne after the Conquest being very large, this was at first quite possible.

2. Besides his demesne the king was entitled to numerous feudal dues from his tenants-in-chief, and these were a valuable part of his income.

3. The profits of administering justice, when most crimes were punished by fines, were considerable, and certain pleas were reserved for the Crown.

4. There were other royal rights of which the most profitable were purveyance and pre-emption.

5. Danegeld was the only direct national tax.

6. During the eleventh century the army was transformed from the national fyrd with a nucleus of huscarles, to a feudal host of armed and mounted knights supported by followers from their own manors.

PART II

CHANGES BY THE END OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

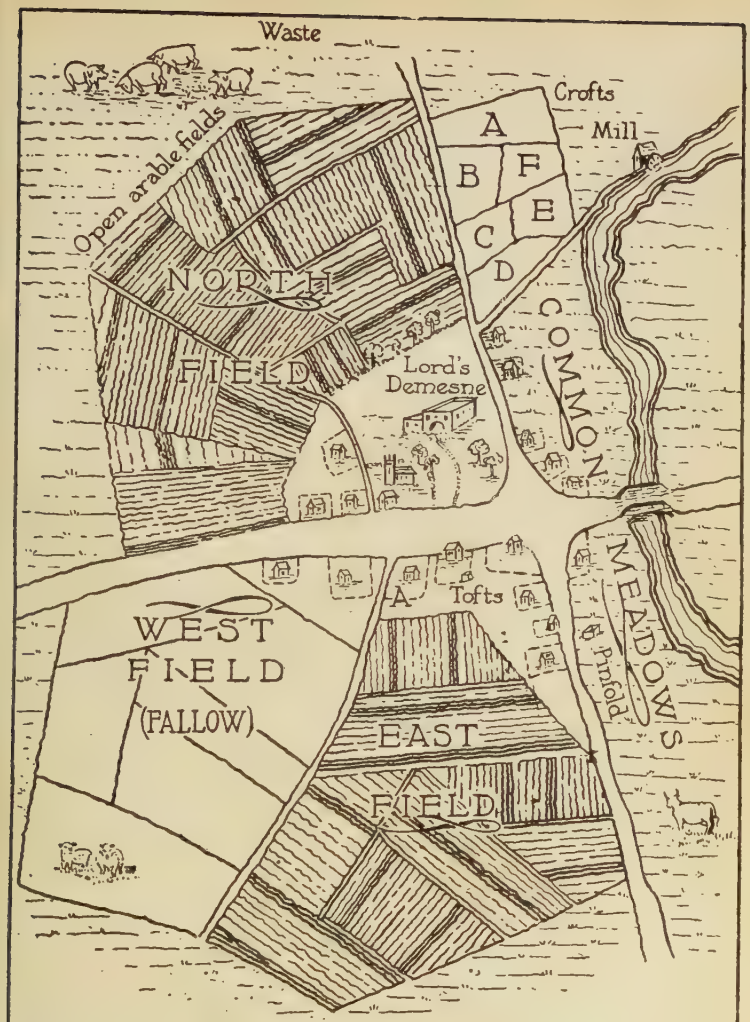
1. The Manorial System in its Prime

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the complete organization of England on the manorial system, and also the beginning of its decline. Let us try to picture this system at its height. We have seen in Part I how the strong rule of the Norman kings tended to reduce the organization of the country to the feudal pattern, though William I's action, in claiming direct allegiance to himself from all, prevented the worst forms of feudal anarchy and tyranny. Still the arrangement has been aptly compared by Maitland to a pyramid of broad base and low height, the slope of which the Norman conquest tended to steepen.

The Unfree Peasant. Starting from the lowest layer of this pyramid, the basis on which the whole was built, we find in the twelfth century the unfree peasant for the most part *adscriptus* (bound) to the land. We may divide him into three classes:

1. The Slave Class. This was small in number and the slave as an absolute chattel of his master had disappeared by the end of the thirteenth century.

2. The Cotter, holding about 3–5 acres of land round his cottage, which he cultivated with the help of his family, and paying some labour services as rent to his lord. He had no share in the common fields and possessed no oxen. Possibly he eked out a scanty living by working also for the richer villeins. This cotter class was more important than would appear at the first



Tofts surrounding a cottage.
A-F are crofts belonging to individual tenants.
The dark strips belong to A, a customary tenant.

glance. They were numerous all over the country, and they had a position less bound by tradition and capable of swifter change than had the holder of a virgate in the common field. Five acres of land could only support a family if cultivated more as a garden than as fields, with spade and hoe rather than plough. The cotter might keep a cow or two and sell his milk, but he would be bound to add to his resources by hiring himself out as a labourer. Here we find then the beginnings of a class of agricultural wage-earners, and also of tiny holdings not cultivated according to the fixed round of immemorial tradition. Both will be of importance in the future. It is among this class that the change from service rent to money payment first begins, and it had made considerable progress before the end of the thirteenth century.

3. The Villein proper, who formed the bulk of the nation, and the basis of its economy. He usually held a virgate (30 acres) or half-virgate of land distributed in strips about the common fields with his share of the meadows, when the lord did not keep these for his own use, together with rights of pasture for his animals on the fallow, the field stubble and the waste. In return for this he paid labour services to the lord—one, two, or three days week-work, and at harvest and other times of pressure boon-work by himself and all his family, except the housewife. He would, in this work, plough, sow, and reap a fixed portion of the demesne, using his own oxen and often his own seed. He might also have to pay certain portions of his produce, his fowls, geese, honey, &c., to the lord.

So far he may seem to be a small tenant-farmer, paying in labour and produce instead of money, but we have not yet come to the end of his obligations. All the above could be paid, and sometimes were paid, by freemen and socmen, but the villein was also in a state of personal dependence. He could not leave his holding even if he wished, and as we shall see in the next chapter the towns were beginning to have attractions; at his death the lord resumed the land, though custom decreed that it should usually be handed back to the heir on payment of a fine;

he could not sell his stock or marry his daughter, sometimes not even his son, without the lord's consent. He had to pasture his beasts in the lord's demesne, to cart and carry at his lord's orders, and lastly, could apparently be turned out of his land at the will of the lord, for in 1280 the Abbot of Burton successfully asserted his right to eject his tenants if it pleased him. The lawyers had by this time decided, probably contrary to what had been the ancient custom of the realm, that the villein could not sue his lord in the courts. As for the members of the villein's household, brothers and younger sons, they were villeins by birth and could be disposed of at the will of the lord; they formed the bulk of the manorial and personal servants of the lord, and, though not slaves, were in a very real sense his property. Lastly, a villein was liable to be taxed at the lord's will. Now all this sounds very like slavery, and yet as a matter of fact the villein had rights as an individual, and still more as a member of a corporate body. (1) First of all, he could secure justice in the courts against any one but his lord. You could not rob, injure, or cheat a villein with impunity, indeed you were liable to bring his lord down on you as well, and to pay accordingly. (2) Although the lord was in law absolute, the custom of these village communities was so strong that he rarely ventured on an open or gross injustice. (3) The lord wanted labourers quite as much as the villeins wanted land, so it did not pay to eject his tenants. Even the overbearing Abbot mentioned above reinstated his recalcitrant villeins after he had sufficiently humiliated them.

Modern economic doctrine had no place in the twelfth century; custom took the place of competition, and rent in the modern sense was unknown. One of the difficulties in our getting a grasp of mediaeval life is the absence of competition, and the strong public feeling against any exhibition of it. Without competition and the free movement of labour, modern economic theory falls to the ground.

The Freeman and the Socman. Above the villein in status, though often not in material prosperity, we find two classes, the freeman and the socman of Domesday. The freeman was

connected with the manor chiefly through the manorial courts of which we shall speak later, and by certain feudal dues such as wardship[1] and marriage,[1] relief,[1] &c. These we shall speak of in connexion with the lord's relations to the king. Briefly we may say that as the lord held his land of the king, so the freeman held his of the lord, often too by tenure of military service. He had the right to dispose of it as he pleased.

The socman of Domesday Book, by the end of the twelfth century, had either been depressed into villeinage or had succeeded in maintaining his freedom and held his land by the less menial services. This class was fairly numerous, and the lawyers were beginning to call all free tenure, not that of military service, tenure in socage. He performed labour services, usually not week-work, only boon-work, and owed suit of court to the lord's court, i. e. was bound to attend it, but he was a freeman and could sue his lord in the king's courts. The line between the villein and the socman was often difficult to draw, and the courts devised various tests, though the assumption was usually made that a man was a villein unless he could prove the contrary. The men of Kent were generally successful in getting themselves recognized as socagers, many others were not. The chief tests of villeinage were performance of week-work, payment of merchet (fine for marrying a daughter), or holding the office of reeve.

The Lord. We have referred several times to the lord of the manor, and so far he seems to be a sort of all-powerful tyrant against whom no one had any rights. But he was not the apex of the pyramid—he might even be a long way down its slope. For the essential point in the Feudal System was that every one was responsible to some one else—every one held his land 'of' some one else; topmost of all came the king. In any given manor the lord might be holding direct of the king, i. e. he might be a tenant-in-chief, or there might be one or more in between him and the king. But whomever he held it from, he paid rent for it by military service, i. e. he was bound to give the king his personal aid and that of a fixed number of followers in time of

[1] See p. 27.

war, and there was plenty of war in those days. Besides this he had to pay all the feudal obligations described before in the account of the king's revenue.[1] Wardships and marriages, in particular, were a heavy burden on the estate, and we find mothers buying the wardship of their children and women the right to arrange their own marriages. King John so abused his rights in this respect, that we find one of the chief clauses of Magna Carta dealing with the grievance.

The questions arise, Where did the lord get the money for all this? How did he live and keep up the state of a great or small feudal lord? As to living, he lived literally on the produce of his manor or manors. If, as was often the case, he owned several, he moved from one to the other, staying a month or more at each, and having eaten up its stores passed on to the next. It was the business of his officers to see that the food was there ready for him on his arrival with his family and servants and men-at-arms. Here we see the use of the produce rents of some of the peasants. A few dozen fowls, eggs, and honey become a matter of importance in such a hungry household.

As for money, he sold the surplus produce of his demesne in the markets which were becoming numerous, or grew wool for export with profits increasing as we get to the thirteenth century. Some of the great lords held as many as 100 manors, and such large estates were often called 'honours'. Besides these resources, he had the fines of the courts, which were considerable.

Holding positions exactly the same as that of the lords were the great Abbeys and Priories. They held of the king or their mesne lord often not by military service but in frank-almoign, i. e. promises of spiritual services such as prayers for the benefactor's soul. Abbeys such as Barking, Glastonbury and Shaftesbury were the lords of many manors and among the largest landholders in the kingdom.

Manorial Officials. It is obvious that even a small manor required some administration and that large ones must have occupied many officers.

[1] See p. 27.

The highest officer was the SENESCHAL or STEWARD, who was responsible for the governance of several manors. He represented the lord and was all-powerful, his general business being supervision.

Next came the BAILIFF, whose business it was to see to the lord's interest in a single manor. A thirteenth-century book gives us a picture of a busy life for him. He is to know everything connected with his baillie, to see that the ploughs do each day

A WINDMILL

their allotted task, to have care that the ground is properly marled and manured, that the villeins duly perform their services, and that stock is cared for. He is responsible for all produce and must sell it in the nearest market.

The REEVE is an officer of whom we hear much—he represents the interests of the villagers and is chosen from among them. It was an unpopular office, and men paid to escape its duties. One may suspect that the unfortunate reeve was apt to be ground between the upper and nether millstones, reprimanded by his lord and abused by his fellows. Certainly the temper of Chaucer's reeve seems to have suffered in the process.

Besides these important officers we find the hayward who looked after wood and corn and meadows ; the auditors who kept the accounts, and were becoming numerous as money rents were beginning to take the place of services ; the ploughmen, waggoners, swineherd, and the deye or dairymaid.

One important person in the village and manorial economy must not be omitted—the miller. The mill was the lord's

A FLOUR MILL, early fourteenth century

property, often rented, and was very valuable. One of the most burdensome of the villein's obligations was to grind his corn at the lord's mill. Many cases occur of fines in the Manorial Courts for possessing private millstones. The miller was entitled to a fraction of the corn ground, and is credited in all the old ballads and stories with taking more than his share. The thirteenth-century variety probably did not differ greatly from his fourteenth-century descendant—' Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries.' [1]

[1] Chaucer, *Prologue*, l. 562.

Twelfth- and Thirteenth-century Farming. It will be well to begin by a look at an actual manor belonging to Merton College, Oxford, in 1298. There are twenty freehold tenants, four villeins, and four cotters. The freeholders hold by different tenures: one does military service for forty days and suit at the lord's court; another 'pays 5*s.* 6*d.* yearly and three capons and to find a reaper for three days in harvest and to carry corn for one and a half days and carry one load annually to a neighbouring town'; others pay various sums. The villeins hold half-virgates (15 acres probably) and pay 2*s.* 10½*d.* money rent, a hen at

PRUNING AND PLANTING TREES

Christmas, ten eggs at Easter, and a goose on August 1. One of them (a woman) has to find two reapers two days of one week during harvest and in three other days to cut ½ acre of corn daily. In another week she is to find two reapers on Monday and one on Friday. Every fourth week from September 29 to August 1 she is to work with one other person, Saturdays and feast-days excepted. She is to help wash and shear the lord's sheep. She is to plough 6 measures of land every fourth Sunday and 1½ acres at varying times of the year. In this way the demesne was cultivated and the villeins cultivated their own fields at the same time. The four cotters were no doubt general labourers.

What did they grow, and when? In autumn the fallow field was re-ploughed, having previously been ploughed in the summer, and wheat or rye or a mixture of them known as maslin was sown; in the spring the field that last year had wheat was ploughed and sown with barley, oats, peas, or beans. Oats were not common in the midlands and south; peas and beans were used for fodder; barley was important, for the consumption of ale was enormous. Two bushels to the acre of wheat and rye seed produced 10 bushels, and 4 of oats and barley seed brought 12–16 bushels, a scanty crop to modern eyes. English wheat

MOWING

acres in the twentieth century produce usually over 30 bushels to the acre.

Was any care taken to improve the land? It was hoed and harrowed, but the harrow was primitive, wood at the best, often only a hawthorn tree weighted with logs. Clay and marl were known and used, but expensive; soot and sea-sand were added when available. Draining, except by ridging, was rare, consequently clay lands were not highly cultivated. Roots, which play a large part in modern farming, were unknown. For manure there was the refuse of the farmyard, and of sheep, unless this was appropriated entirely by the lord. Beans were dibbled, other seed sown broadcast. Weeding was done in June. When harvest came, there was a busy scene. The entire

village—men, women, and children—turned into the fields. The men reaped the wheat, cutting it high on the stalk, and were followed by women binding it into sheaves. A band of five could reap and bind 2 acres a day. Barley and oats were mown. The straw of the wheat was either reaped a second time or ploughed into the fields later. When all was gathered, the fencing was taken down and the cattle wandered over the stubble till winter forced them under cover, or, more commonly, heralded their conversion into salt beef. The threshing and winnowing was done later, the latter usually by women.

WEEDING

Each man had the produce of his own strip in the common field, though he had to use his neighbour's oxen as well as his own to plough it. Equally important with the arable land was the meadow and pasture. The meadows were permanently fenced grass land, kept for hay till the end of June. They too were in strips and each villein had his strip distributed by lot. This was, however, not always so; cases occurred where the lord kept the meadows entirely for his own use. There were also 'stinted' pastures called 'hams', hedged in, to which each villager might send a fixed number of animals, and the names sometimes suggest that small fields of this kind were granted specially to certain officials or artisans in return for their

services, e. g. Brandersham, Smithsham, Herdsham, or even Parson's Close or Parson's Acre.

Lastly came the commons, free and usually 'unstinted'—i. e. each villager could send as many animals as he pleased to graze there. It was possible for the lords to abuse this privilege.

But quite as important as land is the stock, and in the Middle Ages it was the more valuable of the two. Chief were the oxen, of which a virgater usually possessed two. The heavy plough demanded eight oxen to draw it, though four-team ploughs

REAPING

were not unknown. Oxen were preferred to horses as being steadier (any sudden jolt was bad for primitive plough-gear); they cost less to keep in winter—about one-quarter it has been estimated, and were hardier and less expensive in shoeing and harness—they were only shod on the forefeet. Lastly, the ox is 'mannes meat when dead, while horse is carrion'. 'Mannes meat' they may have been, but of a kind we should hardly appreciate now—tough and unfattened, and largely bone and gristle. At the end of June, when the hay had been cut, aged cows, worn-out oxen and toothless sheep were turned into the hay meadows and later on to the stubble, and in the autumn killed and salted for winter food. Cattle were rarely fatted,

and fresh meat was a luxury for lords and rich men. From the cows they got milk, butter, and cheese, the last usually made with skim milk. Butter was sold or salted, the butter-milk drunk. Ewes were milked as well as cows. Milk in winter was expensive and it paid to kill the calf.

Sheep have been called the sheet-anchor of farming—in the Middle Ages they were indispensable for manure and the basis of our chief export trade. Sheep-farming on a biggish scale was a venture, but a profitable one, and was much practised by the monasteries. The pig was ubiquitous and, except for

WINE-MAKING

three months in the year, self-supporting. Only the boar was really fatted for killing, and he was a Christmas feast.

Poultry were numerous and cheap; there were geese, fowls, and ducks—on big estates swans and peacocks, both regarded as luxurious eating. The dove-cote was a privilege of the lord and a pest to the farmer. The pigeons were eaten and were also valued for manure. Among the food supplies were game and rabbits, the latter possibly a recent introduction, for they were dear; in the thirteenth century three rabbits cost as much as a wether. Other village products were cider, oil from nuts, and honey. The last was important, being the only sweetener known.

Vineyards were not unknown; there are thirty-eight in Domesday Book, mostly in monasteries. It is not absolutely necessary to suppose a much greater warmth of climate, as the wine may have been more like vinegar; it was sweetened and flavoured with honey and blackberries.

It is worth while noting that the stock, live and dead, of a farm was worth much more than the land, and this fact probably made it easier for the custom of primogeniture, i.e. inheritance by the eldest son, to spread from military fiefs to socage and villein tenure. Only in Kent did the ancient custom of gavel-

SOWING CORN

kind, equal inheritance of land by all the sons, survive. But since stock and chattels were inherited by all, and since they were of much more value than the land, primogeniture was not so great an injustice, and it tended to keep the holding together. But the heir must often have found himself with too little stock for his land, and bargains and exchanges were no doubt frequent.

Outside Supplies. The chief things that the village had to buy from outside were, as in the eleventh century, iron, steel (which cost four times the price of iron), salt, and mill-stones. Of these last, the best came from near Paris, and we find bailiffs calling on the villeins to help cart them on the last stage of their journey. Salt was largely got by evaporating sea-water, and

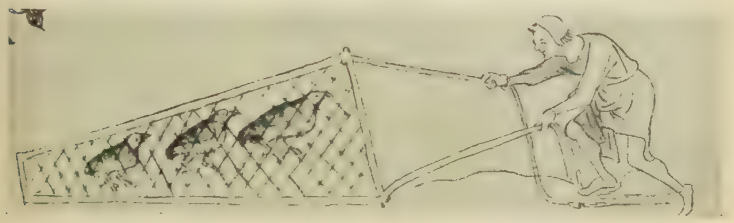
a wet summer sent the price up, but some was imported from Guienne, and the brine pits of Cheshire were worked. Canvas for the sails of the wind-mills, and cloths for use in the dairy were also bought, as were brass and copper and earthenware vessels. The clothes of the villagers were spun and woven and made by the women, and only for the knights and ladies of the hall would there be purchases of better and more gorgeous cloths and silks made abroad. Wine would be imported, where the lord was a rich man. From 1280 onwards, tar became an essential to every farmer, as it was the only known remedy for scab, a disease that then appeared for the first time among the sheep.

CATCHING RABBITS WITH FERRET AND NET

Sales. But if you buy you must also sell: no man and no community can do the one without the other. What had the village to sell? Two things mainly—hides and the wool of its sheep, in so far as it did not use it to clothe itself. As we shall see in Part III, this wool was England's main export in the Middle Ages and the basis of its commerce. It was sold at the great fairs and markets to merchants and their agents, and it was perhaps the heaviest responsibility of the bailiff to effect the sale satisfactorily.

Women. What share did the women take in the work of the village? First of all *when* she held land, whether as a Royal Princess the Lady of many manors, or as a cotter's heir the holder of a few poor acres, she did the services attached to them, and when these consisted of manual labour she carried them out.

There seems little difference in the early Middle Ages between man's and woman's work. We have records of women ploughing, sowing, reaping, shearing sheep, and carting, as well as taking charge of the dairy and milking cows and ewes. All kinds of farm-work, from ploughing to bird-scaring, seem to have been done by them, and carting seems to have been specially frequent. The Durham Priory accounts record payment to women for carrying water, sand, stones, faggots, and manure, and our records of the thirteenth century give us such names as Agnes the Falconer, Emma the Herdswoman, Agnes the Dairywoman, Helya the Waggoner, and Alicia and Agnes Carters. Winnowing



CATCHING BIRDS WITH NET

was largely the work of women. Robert Grossetête's 'Rules', addressed to a woman, the Countess of Lincoln, indicate a minute knowledge of the management of a large estate, which he expects her to possess. Most work was paid for as piece-work, and at the same rate as men; the daily wage was usually less than that of a man, but not always. Daily wages were mostly for unskilled labour, where the man's strength was worth more. Besides their share in the farm work, women made all the clothes right from the raw wool, washing and combing the fleece, spinning, weaving and dyeing, as well as the final cutting out and making.

Material Position of the Peasant. The difficult question arises, Was the peasant better or worse off, relatively to the standard of the age, than he is to-day or was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? The virgater, whom we may call a small farmer, probably lived in a state of rude plenty as far as food was

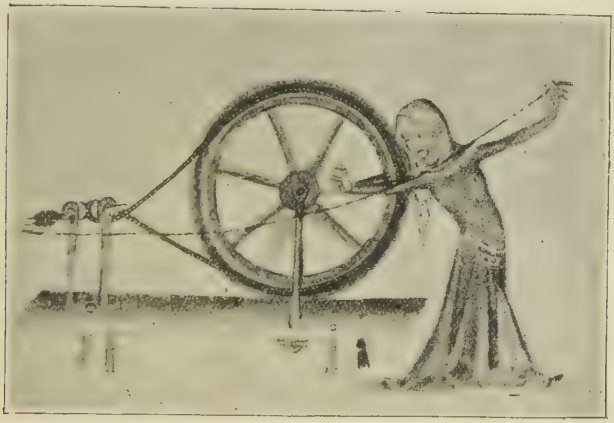
concerned. It was coarse, but he had enough. The cotters too, from which class come the wage labourers, probably were well above the starvation line. The ordinary wage was 2*d.* a day, for women 1*d.* a day, and for boys ½*d.*, but the bulk of the work was piece-work. It has been estimated that a peasant, holding 20 acres of arable land with his rights of pasture and meadow, would make about £3 to £4 profit per annum, and his expenditure would be about £3, leaving a net saving of 10*s.* to £1 a year, which he could utilize to buy up his feudal obligations or advance his children in the world.

THRESHING CORN WITH FLAILS

The standard of living was low, especially in matter of housing; but probably a smaller proportion of the population was underfed than nowadays. Wages were highest near the towns and manufacturing districts, i. e. near London and in East Anglia. Artisans were better paid, a good carpenter got 3½*d.* a day, but outside the towns they were not numerous. Holidays were few, if Walter of Henley is to be trusted. Writing in the thirteenth century, he estimates 308 working days per year. Sunday was usually but not universally a holiday. So much for labour; what capital was needed? It has been estimated as roughly £1 an acre, three times as much as the value of the land. This was much higher relatively than the £6 of the eighteenth or the £12 of the nineteenth centuries. Except where the lord supplied stock and implements, the villein and even the cottager was in a sense a man of substance. The employment of such considerable capital, as large estates demanded, required the keeping of accounts, and the bailiffs' account rolls of the thirteenth century show great minuteness and accuracy. They were carefully audited by clerks paid by the job, so there must have been

a considerable number of these travelling from manor to manor. The fact that their pay is poor and compares badly with that of an artisan suggests that there were plenty of them, and that the thirteenth century was not so illiterate as has sometimes been supposed.

Manorial Courts. A word or two must be said on the legal arrangements of these communities. Every manor had its court, and it is from their records that much of our knowledge is drawn. At these courts all the civil affairs of the manor were



ROPE-MAKING

decided, holdings passed to the heir or changed hands, the fines and reliefs were paid, the services by which the land was held recorded. Tenants were kept up to their duties and fined for neglecting them. The fines were part of the lord's revenue. The judgments were decreed by the assembled tenants, according to the custom of the manor.

The lord, however, might have criminal jurisdiction, in which case he held a court twice a year, which superseded the Hundred Court. Here all lesser crimes were judged and punished, the profits in fines going to the lord. View of Frankpledge was taken, by which each man was responsible for the showing up and

surrender of criminals. The maintenance of roads and bridges was also secured in these courts. Some villages bought from the lord the right to hold their own courts, and this becomes interesting in connexion with the growth of towns.

Summary. 1. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw all England subject to the manorial system, the basis of which was the villein, an unfree peasant holding land by labour services

RUSTICS OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

at the will of the lord. But in the thirteenth century the system is already showing signs of decline.

2. The village was still almost self-sufficing, providing itself with food and clothes. Luxuries for the lord, and a few essentials such as iron, came from outside.

3. The material condition of the peasant was not one of actual suffering. He had enough to eat and to wear, shelter of a kind, and he could and did save money by which he could improve his status. He worked hard, but he did not starve, and unemploy-

ment was rare. Liberty, in the modern sense, no man of any rank possessed.

4. The manorial courts made the manor a completely enclosed unit ; justice and fair play among its members were thus secured within its own boundaries, and custom regulated even the tyranny of the lord.

2. Growth of the Towns. Rise of the Gilds

In the last chapter we followed a movement away from freedom and diversity towards a system of interdependence, control, and even tyranny. Rural England became feudalized as we call it, organized into a state in which each man's place was rigidly defined from birth. He was protected certainly by custom from outrageous tyranny, but neither he himself nor his property was absolutely his own. Freedom no man knew. But at the very moment that this system reached its highest perfection in the country, a movement in exactly the opposite direction grew rapidly in the towns. We have seen that in the eleventh century there were some hundred or so towns, many of the inhabitants of which did not earn their living by agriculture, nor hold their land and houses by ordinary labour rents. In the twelfth century instead of these differences disappearing and the townspeople becoming organized on a more strict manorial principle, as happened in the country, exactly the reverse took place. With peace and order had come prosperity, men had surplus produce to dispose of, markets grew apace, and it became increasingly possible for men to live, not by producing all they ate and more, but by specializing in some industry and exchanging the product of their handicraft for the surplus food produced by others. Such men naturally congregated where others came, i. e. in markets or small towns. The cotter class and the younger sons of villeins and freemen often found such a means of livelihood more to their taste than that of a day labourer on the lord's demesne, and at present the lord

had no great objection to giving them leave to go. So the towns grew and trade and industry increased.

But it must not be forgotten that even in the so-called boroughs the feudal system ruled, though the inhabitants of one borough might have many separate lords. In market towns that formed part of a manor the feudal services were exacted to the full.

Disabilities of the Townsfolk. Let us look for a moment at the chief disabilities under which the townsfolk suffered by being bound by a system devised for a rural community. (*a*) Military service to the lord at any time; (*b*) suit in the lord's court; (*c*) the non-admission of new burgesses without the lord's consent, and the town wanted new members both to share taxes and to increase trade; (*d*) the necessity for the lord's consent to the re-marriage of widows; (*e*) the exaction by the lord of tolls on all things sold in the market and the consequent hindering of trade; (*f*) the obligation to grind corn at the lord's mill and bake in his oven, serious burdens in a rural manor, but in a town intolerable.

The Lord of the Manor, however, was not the only oppressor of the poor townsman, worse still was the King's Sheriff of the county. He usually farmed the county taxes from the king, i. e. he paid the king a fixed sum and recouped himself as best he could. Human nature proved weak and his exactions became a byword; the best-hated man of the early Middle Ages was the sheriff, as ballads and tales show clearly—it is not by chance that Robin Hood, the popular hero, fought the sheriff of Nottingham, rather than any other tyrant of the day. The sheriff was tax-gatherer, but he was also recruiting officer, and still more important, chief judge in the local courts. In all these capacities he seems to have required bribes either to do his work or to neglect it, according to the desires of the suppliant, and when other supplies failed he did not stick at open outrage, as when at Canterbury he broke down the only bridge into the town and forced all travellers to use, and pay for, his ferry.

A third and by no means negligible tyrant was the Clerk of

THE KING'S MARKETS, who appeared at pleasure to examine and stamp the public weights and measures, and, if he did no worse than demand horses to carry him and his men to the next town, the burgesses felt grateful to a kindly fate.

Such being the state of insecurity in which the townsmen lived, it is not surprising to find them combining to secure for themselves the control of those things, on account of which lord, sheriff, or other king's official claimed the right to interfere.

Privileges secured by the Towns. Henry I set the example

A BAKEHOUSE

of granting to burgesses on demesne lands the right to rule and tax themselves, and the twelfth century saw a large number of charters given to the towns, for Henry II for some years followed his grandfather's course, and John has been called the charter-monger.

What were the privileges the towns secured ?

(*a*) First and foremost they got rid of the sheriff

(i) by farming their own taxes, and

(ii) by having their own courts.

The first of these is known as the *firma burgi*, by which they paid a fixed sum to the king and then taxed themselves to meet it. The second they secured by substituting the *borough court*

for the hundred court and ensuring that no burgess should be called to the latter.

(iii) The third exaction by the sheriff was got rid of by an undertaking to provide a fixed contingent for military service.

(*b*) Equally important was it to secure the election of their own officials and the elected mayor appears early in the charters.

(*c*) They claimed too the right to control the market and secure for the townsmen the monopoly of trade to the exclusion of 'foreigners', i. e. men from other towns. This claim often took the form of a demand for a Merchant Gild, of which more will be said later.

(*d*) and (*e*). Two other liberties were sometimes but not always secured, viz. freedom for the citizens from tolls in other towns throughout the kingdom, and liberty for villeins who settled in the town. This last was fairly common and secured for the villein, who resided in the town unchallenged for a year and a day, safety from his lord, if claimed later. It was an important right, for it ensured a stream of recruits for the town. In the fourteenth century we shall see how it increased the difficulties of the lords when labour became scarce after the Black Death.

These privileges were usually secured by charters from the king, often at first for a short period like ten years, and only later granted in fee farm, i. e. in perpetuity. Even then there was a certain insecurity, for the king might resume control, or repudiate the grant of his predecessor. Consequently we find burgesses paying heavy sums to get their charters renewed at the beginning of a reign.

Progress of various Classes of Towns. The towns of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries may be divided into three classes, viz. those on the royal demesne, those on the estate of a lay baron, those whose overlords were bishops or abbots.

(*a*) Towns on the Royal Demesne. All tenants of the 'ancient demesne', i. e. the royal manors that William I took over from Edward the Confessor, held certain definite privileges. Even the villeinage on these lands was freer and more independent, and it was therefore natural that the towns which

earliest secured privileges were royal property. Such were York, Winchester, Norwich, Southampton, Nottingham, and Gloucester. It was easier for the king to grant favours, they cost him less. He wanted his taxes and his soldiers, but it was a matter of indifference through whom he got them. If the bailiff of the town undertook to see he got them, the king was just as pleased as if the official were the sheriff, better pleased indeed, for strong Norman kings had no fancy for powerful local magnates and were glad to lessen their influence. As to courts of justice, while the baronial and ecclesiastical lords clung to their private courts as the chief source of their power, the king, the fountain of justice itself, just now, too, busy devising schemes to draw all causes into his own royal courts, was careless if the borough inhabitants wanted to settle their own lawsuits. At any moment he could call suits up to his own courts at pleasure. But the borough court was the centre of civic life and all important to the citizens, for by its control they managed to regulate trade and industry to their liking—matters which at this time concerned the king but little. As to the royal officials, the Clerk of the Market, &c., if the burgesses chose to do the work it saved the king the salaries of a lot of civil servants and the burghers were willing to pay for the privilege. So the towns on the royal demesne found no insuperable difficulty in securing self-government, and almost all the prosperous towns and bigger cities were on royal soil.

(*b*) Towns on the Estates of Lay Lords. Such were Berkeley and Leicester, while others granted to a noble by the king, like Barnstaple and Liverpool, were in much the same position. These had a more difficult task. It was to the interest of the lords to keep to their rights, and the burgesses had little to offer in exchange. But a long succession of powerful Norman and Plantagenet kings prevented the baronage from gaining the overwhelming position of privilege they secured in France, and war both civil and foreign weakened their numbers and exhausted their treasuries. The town kept up a perpetual policy of asking for more ; unlike a family, it neither died out for want of heirs

nor weakened by individual disaster. In the long run the lay lord was no match for the community; every time of poverty and embarrassment was eagerly seized to exact fresh privileges and by the end of the Middle Ages most of such towns were free. But that time was not yet, and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw only the beginning of the struggle.

(*c*) Towns on Ecclesiastical Estates. But for the towns on the lands of the church no such victory waited. In Lynn and Wells, in St. Albans and Bury St. Edmunds the advantages of an undying community were matched by an equally undying corporation, backed by all the material and spiritual powers of a universal church. Abbots and bishops held to every jot and tittle of feudal power, would indeed have thought they were betraying their order to have done otherwise, and for the most part scrupled not to use spiritual weapons if earthly ones failed. The towns kept up the fight bravely, but in vain—the end of the Middle Ages saw them still in feudal toils, and Lynn was fighting in 1520 for the control of its courts, a privilege secured to Norwich 300 years before. It is probable that the hatred of the sixteenth century for the whole monastic system had quite as much to do with its feudal tyranny as with disgust at its morals or hatred of its superstition. The fight, however, was not without its value. It was in the towns that men learnt to work together for a common cause, to face defeat after defeat in the name of freedom, and, when the time came for the nation to rise as one to demand the right to govern itself, it was the towns that led the revolt and whose experience on a smaller scale had created the tradition and the habit that taught them the way to victory.

Organization of the Borough. A borough was ruled usually by a bailiff (later called a mayor) and a body of twelve as council. Generally there was another body of twenty-four used for consultation or consent. Ordinances were drawn up by the twelve and presented to the burgesses for their consent, at least that seems to have been the practice in early days. They were then sealed with the Common Seal. On the whole in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the number of burgesses was

small, the rule was popular and the commonalty carried weight. There were no great differences of wealth, numbers were not unmanageable and most people took their share in the government.

Difficulties that survived. Even in boroughs that had secured the privileges enumerated above difficulties survived. They came chiefly from the survival of special jurisdictions. For example, in Winchester in the heart of the city was a certain Manor of Godbeate belonging to the Abbey of St. Swithin's, to whose Abbot was added the further honour of being Bishop of Winchester, and over this manor the mayor and town authorities had no control. Not even the king's writ ran there. Naturally it became the haunt of every outlaw and vagabond of the town, whose right of sanctuary was rigidly maintained by the monks. Even two of the city gates were in the hands of the bishop. Exeter too had such a precinct, where the monks claimed freedom from arrest for all, and also freedom from taxes and dues, military service, and help to repair the walls that guarded them. In Bristol the whole ward of Redcliffe belonged to the Lord of Berkeley, and its inhabitants refused all control except their lord's. The Berkeleys claimed the river, held their own courts and prison, their own markets and fair, and refused the mayor's Assize of Bread and Ale even though he was the king's marshal. In the twelfth century Worcester, a town of 2,000 inhabitants, had five gallows belonging to as many different lords. The castles also that overawed the cities were in the king's control, but here, too, the royal hand was lighter and most of them were demolished at an early date, except where military considerations made their existence imperative.

Regulation of Trade by the Towns. It will be well here to try to get some idea of what a thirteenth-century citizen regarded as the proper function of the authorities in regulating trade. In the first place it was a fixed idea that the trader and the manufacturer existed for the benefit of the consumer, and when interests clashed it was the consumer who must be considered. The welfare of all was more important than the success of the few.

Hence the community had the right to control the actions of all who offered to supply its needs.

The first essential being ample and pure food, every town had its Assize of Bread and Ale, which decreed the quality of the wares, the measures by which they might be sold, and even the price. So important was this deemed that in 1266 the central government issued an act enforcing the local assizes and fixing a general price. For in the Middle Ages men thought that there was a 'just price' for all things, a price such that all who contributed to produce the article could make thereby an honest living suitable to his station, no more, no less. They refused to recognize the law of supply and demand as a reason for rising prices; the fact that you could get people to pay more in times of scarcity did not justify you in doing so. Therefore there were no commercial crimes equal in their eyes to those of the forestaller and regrator. Cheating was a minor offence; all traders, especially men of the victualling trades, were liable to cheat, and elaborate checking and supervision were enacted to prevent it. But to try to corner (or forestall) the market by buying supplies before they reached it, or by purchasing (or regrating) large quantities to re-sell at a higher price, was the last stage of commercial immorality. The men of the thirteenth century had no use for the middleman, even the merchant of foreign goods was only justified in making a living—he might not make what was possible, only what was fair. Listen to the good citizens of Bristol on the forestaller: 'A manifest oppressor of the poor and a public enemy of the whole commonalty and country, who hastens to buy before others, grain, fish, herrings, or anything vendible whatsoever, coming by land or water . . . making gain, oppressing his poorer and despising his richer neighbours, and who designs to sell more dearly what he so unjustly acquired . . . and so by fraudulent art or craft he misleads town and country.'[1] As a modern writer puts it, 'The economist of that period had not grasped the fact that cleverness shown in buying an article cheap and selling the same thing, without any further

[1] *The Little Red Book of Bristol*, ii. 220.

expenditure of labour, dear, if done on a sufficiently large scale, justifies the bestowal of the honour of knighthood or a peerage.'[1]

It must be remembered that, at the time of which we are now speaking, control was comparatively easy, for towns were small and the officials could really supervise. That where trade was on a larger scale matters might prove more difficult is shown by the effect of bad harvests on London, where the mayors in the next century were forced to establish municipal granaries and even to import corn from Prussia, since storing of grain with a view to a better market was forbidden the ordinary trader.

Mediaeval Trade inter-municipal. Another peculiarity of trade in the Middle Ages was the way each town was a sort of small nation. The Englishman's attitude to the alien has always been rather insular, but in the age we are speaking of this attitude belonged also to the citizen of one town towards the 'foreigner' of another. It excites a smile now if we hear a Devon farmer talking of 'vurriners vrom Zumerset', but it was correct English and accurate fact in the mouth of a mediaeval townsman. The man of Bristol had no more right in the town of Gloucester than the man of Rouen or Ypres, and municipal authorities arranged mutual favours with towns not 50 miles away as if they were sovereign states. Nay more, we find English towns calling upon continental ones to compel reparation to be made by their defaulting citizens, or threatening reprisals, without reference to king or parliament. This is a most important point to remember when we try to make general statements about English towns.

The Merchant Gild. Side by side with the rise of the municipality, sometimes preceding it, sometimes created by the town's charter, rose an organization known as the Merchant Gild. Probably most towns had such a gild, though London is a notable exception. The first certain case mentioned is the Merchant Gild of Burford, shortly before 1100. This gild was an association of all those who bought and sold in the town, and its object was to ensure two things, a fair price to the consumer and a fair

[1] Salzmann, *English Industries of the Middle Ages*, p. 209.

reward to the seller. We have seen[1] that mediaeval ideas of trade and commercial morality differed greatly from ours in the twentieth century, and to secure practices in accordance with these ideas was the work of the Merchant Gild. Its methods were:

(*a*) The creation of a monopoly of trading for its members within the town and for some distance beyond its walls. Non-gildsmen were allowed, on payment of toll, to sell wholesale, provided they sold only to gildsmen. Thus all retail trade was in the hands of the gild, competition and underselling were eliminated, and, it was supposed, a 'just price' was reached.

(*b*) To prevent forestalling and regrating, all buying and selling were to be done openly, and any gildsman could claim a share in a bargain made by one of his fellows. Hence no individual could attempt to 'corner' or 'rig' the market; the only danger might be if the whole gild tried to do so. But in a small community this would easily be detected and foiled.

(*c*) The gildsmen also made common bargains as a gild and shared the profits.

(*d*) The gild was an association for mutual protection and help. A gildsman who was imprisoned in another town was demanded and even fetched by the authority of the gild. But such action carried also responsibilities and the gild often had to accept liability for its members' debts. For the custom of mediaeval towns, if a 'foreign' merchant left the town in debt, was to distrain on any member of the same town who happened to come that way. He in turn claimed compensation from the real debtor and his gild forced the debtor to pay. But such a custom hampered trade and Edward I made a determined effort to override it. It is doubtful if he succeeded, for the mediaeval burgess was apt to claim that borough custom took precedence of statute law. However, the boroughs often made mutual treaties adjusting the matter.

(*e*) Lastly, the gild was an insurance society against sickness and poverty, and fulfilled its function well. Sick members were visited, supplied with necessaries, and, if poor, buried handsomely

[1] See p. 58.

at the cost of the gild. Members, who fell on poverty undeservedly, were helped to find their feet again and tided over to more prosperous times.

Some merchant gilds claimed freedom from toll throughout the land, as did some boroughs like London. Such freedom must have gone far to break down the monopoly of the various merchant gilds at an early date, especially in the larger towns. Tolls and customs hamper trade, all such exemptions helped to increase it.

Organization of the Gild and its connexion with the Municipality. 1. The gild and the municipality were not the same body, though they must have had many members in common. The burgess was not necessarily a trader and consequently not always a gildsman. The population of an early borough was largely agricultural, and a man might hold land and pay dues on it and so be a burgess without having any claim as a trader to be a member of the gild. On the other hand, a man who traded did not necessarily hold land, and so, though a member of the gild, might not be a burgess. Gilds, too, often included men living outside the town, who thus secured the right to trade. Among these were often abbots, monks, and lay lords. Both the gild and the burgess body included women. Lastly, in the town there were people who were neither burgesses nor gildsmen.

2. The town and the gild had different forms of government. The town, as we have seen, was ruled by a mayor or bailiff and a council of twelve. The gild was governed by an alderman and two or four colleagues. Each organization had its separate laws and separate purse, and we find the gild lending money to the mayor and commune of the borough.

3. The gild controlled trade and arbitrated among its members, but such arbitration did not always prevent dissatisfied gildsmen taking the case to the borough courts if they pleased, for the borough not the gild was the authority for law and police, and had civil and criminal jurisdiction.

Such was the condition in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but as trade grew the members of the Merchant Gild became more

and more identical with the burgesses, and from the fourteenth century the gild tends to lose itself either in the town community or, as we shall see presently, in the aggregate of the craft gilds.

Entrance to the Merchant Gild was by fee, but there were numerous exceptions. Eldest sons and heiresses were often admitted free, younger sons on payment of a smaller fee than outsiders. Heiresses could exercise their rights themselves or, in many gilds, transfer them to their husbands or sons.

Craft Gilds. Within fifty years of the formation of the Merchant Gild another form of association appears. Imagine for a moment a growing town in the twelfth century. It had, perhaps, some 3,000 inhabitants, about 500 households, with say 200 members of the Merchant Gild. These members included all who bought and sold within the borough, and very many of these would make the things they sold as well. But they would not always sell to the general public. Some would make things that were used to make something else; the lorimers, for example, who made the iron parts of a saddle, would sell them to the saddlers, who would make the finished article.

Tanners, too, would sell their leather to shoemakers and cobblers and all the various workers in leather. Now each of these groups of workers had its own special problems and special interests. What more likely, in an age when associations were in the air, than that each craft should tend to unite its members for common objects? Sometimes such association might begin as a burial club, or with the object of keeping lights at a certain shrine, but, since workers in a craft tended naturally to keep together, each association came to consist of men of a single craft. And once together what easier than to talk 'shop', to grumble at the ill-practices of men of another craft, and to combine for mutual protection and help? In some such way arose the Craft Gilds, late in the twelfth century. The earliest was the weavers', who formed gilds in various towns and bought from the king the right to exist. In London the fishmongers did the same. The weavers' gilds in these early days were at war with the burgesses, for they refused to become members of the borough

or to share its burdens. Their position is peculiar, and there seems some likelihood that they were aliens, but there is no absolute evidence. In any case, by the thirteenth century craft gilds were numerous and widely spread, and their members were burgesses and often also members of the Merchant Gild.

Objects of the Craft Gilds. The objects of these craft gilds were much the same as those of the merchant gild :

(*a*) They aimed at a monopoly of the industry. All men of the craft in that town were members of the gild.

(*b*) They desired control of their members for the double purpose of a fair living to the worker and a good standard of craftsmanship. They tried also to fix prices, but as this might savour of attempts to control the market against the consumer, it could only be done indirectly and secretly. They did, however, fix wages. The principle of good workmanship was genuinely desired and everything was done to secure the reputation of the gild in this respect. The doctrine of ' caveat emptor ' is of modern growth and would have been repudiated by any respectable body of craftsmen, however much individuals tried to cheat.

(*c*) Mutual help in sickness and poverty was an essential part of their organization.

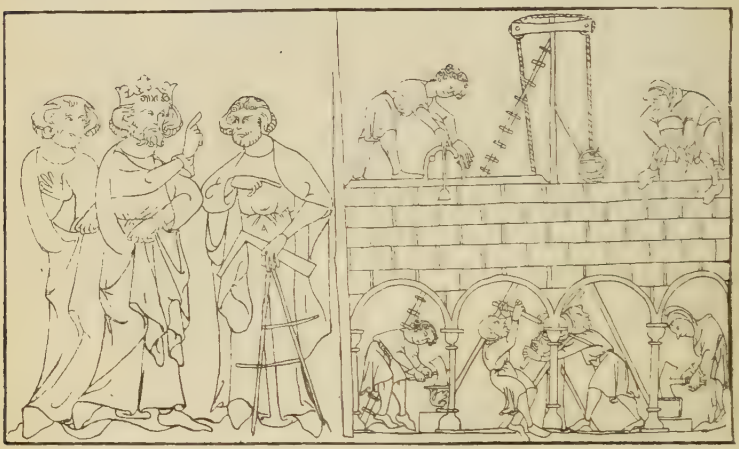
(*d*) The religious functions of the gilds were important. They were regarded as essential and strictly observed. Later on, many gilds supported shrines and priests to serve them, and gave generously to the pious object of prayers for the souls of deceased members. Connected with the religious side of the organization was the custom of arranging pageants and plays for the delight and edification of the townsfolk. The ' mystery ' plays became a heavy charge in later days and reacted on the internal organization of the gilds.[1]

Methods and Customs of the Craft Gilds. Of the methods adopted by the gilds to secure these objects the following were the chief :

(*a*) APPRENTICESHIP. The ordinary way by which the crafts were recruited was by the employment of apprentices. A boy

[1] See p. 132.

or girl who wished to become a hatter or a fishmonger or a weaver would apply to a member of the gild to become his or her apprentice. He bound himself, or his parents bound him, for a period of time varying from four to ten years (the most common period was seven years), to work for and live with the master craftsman, obeying him in all things, learning from him the trade and, except during the last year or so, receiving no wage. In return for his seven or more years' work his master undertook to feed,



BUILDING OPERATIONS IN THE REIGN OF HENRY III

house, and clothe him, to teach him his trade, so that at the end of his apprenticeship he should be thoroughly equipped as a craftsman. He was to have training in all matters, and his master was responsible for his good conduct and might chastise him within reason. If the master did not fulfil his promises, or abused his position tyrannically, the apprentice could complain to the wardens of the craft, and on the third complaint he was transferred to another master. The system was one that turned out not merely skilled workmen, but men trained in ideas of civic solidarity, proud of their craft, proud of their city, and ready in their turn to shoulder the responsibility and bear the burdens

that secured to the city its trade and its independence. In later times it was customary that no one could become a burgess except by way of apprenticeship and membership of a craft gild.

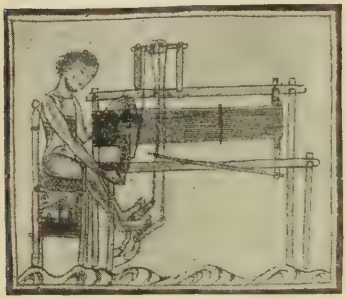
(*b*) SUPERVISION. The second plan for securing good quality work was that of a strict supervision. Each craft gild had its appointed overseers, whose business it was to examine carefully all goods made, to denounce clumsy or fraudulent work and bring offenders before the court of the gild. Mediaeval morality disapproved of sharp practices in trading; as we have seen, it

A DISPENSARY

did not expect the buyer to look out for himself, or consider that one code of morals did for ordinary life and another for trading. 'Business is business' would seem to it a cynical and unchristian maxim. Still men's practices often fall below their code and the craftsman of the thirteenth century was too often veritably a man of craft. We find penalties inflicted for such tricks as 'putting better wares at the top than below, moistening groceries to make them heavier, selling second-hand furs for new, soldering together broken swords, selling sheep leather for doe leather'.[1] The ale-wife, who thickened the bottom of her

[1] Ashley, *Economic History*, i. 90.

quart measure with pitch covered with rosemary, and the baker, who had a boy under the kneading-board to abstract through a hole part of his customers' dough under their very eyes, were perhaps unusually audacious and ingenious, but fraud was evidently frequent though the methods were crude. Night work was prohibited, partly to make supervision easier, partly to prevent the ill effects of working by insufficient light. Looms were ordered to be placed in rooms opening on the street, where all could see the work being done. Makers of 'false work' were fined in the courts, half the fine going to the gild and half to the town. Except in London, no man might work at more than one craft, and in most towns shops and market stalls were so arranged that all the men of one industry were together. Hence we get such names as Bread Street, Corn Street, Wine Street, Fleshmarket, and Tanners' Row. This segregation made supervision easier; it also prevented unfair undercutting of prices or attempts to take advantage of one's fellows in any way.



A LOOM

(*c*) MEMBERSHIP OF THE GILD WAS COMPULSORY on all members of the craft in the town, and ordinances were passed against any attempt to make or sell goods by non-members. This was, of course, necessary if supervision was to be effective.

(*d*) MEMBERS of the gild were bound NOT TO GO TO LAW AGAINST EACH OTHER, at any rate until they had submitted the matter to the arbitration of the gild. This did not mean that the gild had a court with jurisdiction outside the borough court. London weavers and fishmongers did claim to have such a court and it took the citizens of London a long time to get rid of this claim, but as a rule the gild merely arbitrated, and had no legal power to enforce its decision.

(*e*) THE GILD, it must always be remembered, was a FELLOW-

SHIP, and members were expected not to rival but to help each other. For instance, one ordinance runs that if a member found he could not finish a contracted job in time, he was to call in other members to help, so that the work should not be lost. Members also in later times bound themselves not to lure away journeymen or servants from fellow members.

(*f*) Sometimes when the gild regulations could not be enforced by law, owing to the opposition of the mayor and the town, the gild secured the obedience of its members by exacting an OATH OF OBEDIENCE from all and suing any recalcitrant member afterwards for breach of oath in a spiritual i.e. an ecclesiastical court.

Organization of the Craft Gilds. The gilds were governed by a warden and an assembly. Originally they were democratic in structure, naturally so when their numbers were small. Later, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the power passed into the hands of a small body of wealthy members.

Relation with the Municipality. In the early days there is no doubt the town as a whole objected to the craft gilds. The early gilds of weavers seem to have been composed of non-burgesses, who held licence from the Crown to exist. It is possible they were aliens. The London fishmongers, too, stood outside the city organization and held their own court or Halimote. These were the very earliest craft gilds; but even when they became general the town authorities still fought them. The point at issue was the supremacy of the town magistrates over *all* its citizens. After fights of varying intensities in different towns we find the municipality the victor, and the craft ordinances were submitted to the magistrates for approval.

Having established their authority, the mayor and his council used the gilds as supervisors and controllers of the trades, making them part of the city organization. Unfortunately in later centuries, especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth, the wealthy members of the craft gilds learnt how to manage the town government by using the power of the craft to gain the town offices for themselves, and they learnt also to use these offices in

their own interest and not that of the community. But in the thirteenth century we have not reached that degenerate stage.

Effect of the Craft Gilds on the Municipality. There was one effect of the craft gilds that must not be passed over ; it was this. Originally the townsmen were mostly landowners ; the town authorities were elected by the burgesses, who held houses and lands in and around the town. As the craft gilds grew, the wealth was gradually transferred from the landholder to the successful craftsman and the towns came to be ruled by them. Thus an interest grew up that was different from, and often opposed to, the landed interest. In the Middle Ages this new commercial and industrial interest only affected the policy of the towns themselves ; we shall see how later it affected that of the nation.

Comparison of Craft Gilds with Trade Unions. The question naturally arises, ' In what did these craft gilds resemble the modern Trade Union ? ' The latter is a union of wage-earners having for its main object the maintenance and raising of the standard of living and the conditions of work of its members. It demands the right to negotiate with the employer for the trade as a whole and so to prevent exploitation of individuals. Its members may consist of men of the same craft, or they may be men of different crafts but all employed by the same set of capitalists. Of the former kind would be a union made up of engineers from all sorts of industries, of the latter such a body as a union of railway servants including every kind of salaried employé, fireman, engine-driver, signalman, cleaner, porter, guard, station-master, clerk, and, in theory at least, heads of departments and managers.

The differences between these modern unions and the craft gilds are more striking than their similarity. Both, it is true, aimed at maintaining ' the standard of life ', i. e. both desired that the worker should secure a fair return for his labour and should keep his way of living up to a certain level of food, clothing and shelter. Both concerned themselves with hours of work and even with wages, but here the resemblance ends. The chief differences are these :

1. The trade union consists only of wage-earners, the craft gild consisted of a few journeymen or wage-earners, and a preponderating mass of masters, men who sold the wares they produced. Industry was not yet divided into the master who organized the manufacture and the wage-earner who merely made the article or part of it. In the early days all the workers in the craft were members of the gild and all were skilled workmen. Master, apprentice and journeyman had much the same interests and were of the same social class.

2. The trade union draws its members from men of the same trade all over the country. The gild only included the workers of one town or district.

3. The craft gild was 'blackleg' proof, membership was compulsory. A trade union can only win members by persuasion, and many thousands of the trade do not join. The craft gild was consequently in a much stronger position.

4. The trade union is concerned entirely with the interest of its members, the wage-earners. It has no concern for the general public, and as a rule takes no cognizance of the quality of the work done by its members. It is merely a fighting machine to secure possible working conditions. The craft gild took care of the quality of its work, enforced it by supervision, and ensured a succession of skilled workmen by the system of apprenticeship.

5. The craft gilds were public bodies, recognized and used by the authorities, under whose control they were supposed to act. Trade unions are at present only unofficially recognized by governments, though recent events show a tendency towards state-recognition. It is not so very long ago that they were illegal societies.

Value of Craft Gilds. There is no doubt that in their early days the craft gilds were very valuable bodies, performing functions of the greatest use. The system of apprenticeship was as perfect a scheme of technical education, suited to the age, as could be wished. The part inadequately played in modern life by Friendly Societies and National Insurance Acts was excellently provided for and carried out by their ordinances, and the ideal of honest

work and fair pay was a high one. Like all human schemes it held in itself the seeds of decay, and with the getting of riches and the increasing complexity of commercial life the rules and customs, that did so well in the thirteenth century, proved inadequate to bind the greed and ambition of men. That time, however, is yet to come and in 1300 we may leave the English town still on the upward grade of prosperity, with no more sick and poor than it could deal with, with unemployment almost unknown, with few social differences, happily occupied in extending its freedom or organizing its own life.

Social Gilds. A word or two on the social and religious gilds may not be out of place, since they took the part of modern friendly societies, insurance societies, and burial clubs. They were very widespread and their members included men and women of every rank of society. Regular payments were made and the money used to support sick and unfortunate members who, thus provided for, did not become a charge on the State. Women paid the same fees and received the same benefits as men. These gilds and the monasteries, with some help from the municipality, provided, between them, for most of the incapables and unemployed of the realm, and it was not till the break up of both at the Reformation that the State found itself faced, on any large scale, with the problem of maintaining those unable to provide for themselves.

Chief Industries of the Thirteenth Century. The chief industries of this period, with the great exception of the woollen manufacture and trade, which will be dealt with later, were as follows :

1. Coal, taken chiefly from surface or outcrop workings. There was little deep mining as yet. The centres were Northumberland, Forest of Dean, Shropshire, Derbyshire, and Nottingham. That the quantity used was not inconsiderable is shown by the fact that in 1257 Queen Eleanor was driven from Nottingham by the unpleasant fumes of so many coal fires.

2. Iron was smelted chiefly in the Forest of Dean. No method was yet known of using coal for the furnaces, so a near and plentiful supply of wood was necessary. The method used

was primitive. Layers of alternate ore and charcoal were built in a sort of cone and an outer case of clay or stone built over it. A draught-hole for the wind was left and sometimes a foot-bellows was used. The molten iron sank to the bottom and was drawn off into a gutter of sand made with small branching gutters, known respectively as the sow and pigs. Iron thus made was hammered and worked up in the smithy. The destruction of forests was great, the ironworks of Tintern using 600 large trees per year. Of the smaller articles made from iron we find knives at Maxstead, needles at Wilton, and razors at Leicester.

3. Lead was mined in Derbyshire, the Mendips, Cumberland, and Devon. As early as 1295 a water mill was used to make the draught. Lead miners enjoyed special privileges as to law courts and taxation, and like tin-workers they might prospect anywhere for new veins of ore. Silver was refined from the lead.

4. Tin-workers, too, were a very special body of men, and the tin trade held privileges from time beyond memory. The mines were in Devon and Cornwall, and the works were mostly in the deposits made by the washing down of ore by the rivers. It was the earliest of our industries to fall into the hands of capitalists, for all tin had to be stamped by government officials and, as this was done only twice a year, a certain amount of capital was necessary to carry on while stores accumulated. Thus we find the wage-system existing among the tinners even in the thirteenth century. But the political position of these miners was unique. The 'stannary' worker (or tin-man) paid taxes not as an Englishman but as a miner. He lived, not by common law, but by miner's law, his courts were miner's courts, his parliament the miner's parliament. He was a freeman and no villein, he could prospect anywhere in the two counties and claim his find, subject to a tax to the lord. He could divert streams and force people to sell him fuel. The parliament of the stannaries legislated and had the power to veto any national legislation that infringed their privileges. These privileges existed in early times and were definitely confirmed in 1201.

5. Stone Quarrying. Owing to difficulties of transit, stone

was got as near the place of building as possible or from places from which it could be brought by water. There were, however, a few noted quarries for building stone such as Beer in Devon, Box for Bath stone, Corfe of which the stone was used for Westminster Abbey, and Portland for Exeter Cathedral. Purbeck marble, of which much of Salisbury Cathedral is built, became fashionable at the end of the twelfth century; it was quarried and shaped in the neighbourhood of Corfe. Quarrying was paid at the rate of unskilled labour, for in 1296 the men got 1½*d.* to 2*d.* a day, and the women 1*d.* for carrying.

6. Metal workers included besides the smiths, goldsmiths, bell-founders and pewterers.

7. Leather-working was extensive. There were two classes of workers, the cordwainers or shoemakers, and the cobblers. Neither might entrench on the other's trade. The problem of when is a shoe not a shoe, or how much mending constituted a new shoe, was sometimes a nice one. There were several other leather-working trades such as the girdlers, the makers of purses, wallets, bottles, &c.

8. Building was not a single industry, as now. If you started to build you did your own contracting, hiring your masons, your tilers, your glaziers, your workers in wrought iron and in marble, your woodcarvers and carpenters, buying your own material. Consequently building was amazingly cheap. The absence of the middleman enabled the mediaeval church-builder to fulfil his pious intention at a cost that the modern public benefactor can only silently envy. Tiles became common for roofing in the thirteenth century; glass was made at Chiddingfold in Surrey and painted after it was manufactured.

9. Brewing and Baking were trades, the former almost entirely in the hands of women. We have already referred to the Assizes of Bread and Ale. There was enormous jealousy and suspicion of the victualling trades and determined efforts were made to keep their members out of municipal offices, where they were apt to abuse the assize in their own interest. In connexion with this industry we have an amusing instance of

an attempt ' to make the punishment fit the crime ', when a seller of bad wine was made to drink a draught of it and had the rest poured over his head.

10. The manufacture of LINEN went on at Shaftesbury in Dorset, at Lewes, and at Aylsham in Norfolk. Cord and hemp were produced at Warwick and Bridport. The latter town even in the twentieth century lives by the same industry.

Women in Industry. As in agriculture, so in industry and trade, the women of the Middle Ages took their full part. While the great bulk of the women were occupied in their homes supplementing the work of their husbands and fathers, either by assisting him in his craft or by adding to the family income by spinning, there was, none the less, a small body of craftswomen and traders acting for themselves. We find women members of the gilds in the following capacities :

(*a*) As widows they kept on their husband's trade and his apprentices, were able to take fresh apprentices and make them free of the gild. If they remarried outside the gild they usually lost their privileges.

(*b*) As daughters they might inherit their father's rights and could exercise them themselves or transfer them to husband or son.

(*c*) Lastly, they could enter the trade, as men did, by way of apprenticeship and work and trade afterwards as single women. It is interesting to find some such women among the richest members of the gilds.

It should be noted that we do not find women's names in *all* gilds, but their names do appear in the majority, and there seems little connexion between their presence or absence and the nature of the work. We find women smiths, workers at the forge, plumbers and bell-founders. We shall see afterwards how large a part they played in the woollen industry. There were many women surgeons, and we find them later in the Trinity House Gild, composed of sea-merchants and master mariners.

Position of Aliens. We have already referred to the early weaver gilds, which may or may not have been composed of

aliens. But all through the Middle Ages we find waves of immigrants, usually of the artisan class, settling in the country. There were Flemish immigrants in the time of Henry I, who settled them finally at Ross and Haverfordwest; there were Flemish mercenaries under Stephen. They were viewed with great hostility by the English craftsman, but were safeguarded to some extent by royal patronage. German miners were regarded as specially skilful and were invited to come and direct mining operations. Aliens as merchants will appear in the next chapter.

But there was one set of aliens who held a peculiar position—the Jews. Their condition in mediaeval Europe was in one way like that of the Early Christians in the Roman Empire. The whole life of the people was so saturated with Christian formula and ceremony that it was as impossible for a conscientious Jew to carry on ordinary trade, hold land, or have social intercourse with his neighbours, as it was for Christians in a land where even a casual greeting might imply a recognition of the pagan gods. The oath custom so penetrated every part of society in Christian Europe, that it in itself excluded the Jew from ordinary avocations. In Winchester alone in England were Jews not outcasts, for we find one admitted as a burgess and member of the Merchant Gild. How ecclesiastical Winchester got over the difficulties is not recorded. Ousted thus from legitimate trade, the Jew everywhere took to moneylending, a business forbidden to Christians by all the terrors of the Church anathema. To understand the Jew it is first necessary to grasp the orthodox attitude towards usury, i.e. the taking of payment for a loan of money. The Church regarded such payment as a breach of the rule of Christ, 'Lend, hoping for nothing again'; it also rested weighty arguments on Aristotle's dictum that money, being barren, could not breed. The Church did not forbid the lending of money for a commercial venture in which the risk was shared, as nowadays in a joint stock company, but to lend money stipulating for a fixed payment for the use of it was forbidden under heavy spiritual penalties. This trade alone then was open to the Jew. There were openings for it. Needy landowners, going on a crusade

or an important court mission, wanted money and gave their land in pledge. The Jew provided the cash at an interest of some 40 per cent. per annum. Naturally he was not exactly a popular person, and he only managed to exist by royal protection. To needy Norman and Plantagenet kings he was very useful, not only as a moneylender. Being at the royal mercy, the Jew could also be tallaged at pleasure. Often he could not pay the heavy tallage, whereupon the king called in the Jew's debts and thus indirectly taxed his people. This was the basis of the intense hatred of the Jews and the desire for their expulsion. It was an act of great self-denial when Edward I banished them in 1290. But the moneylender seems indispensable, and in the thirteenth century the Jews were rivalled by a body of merchants from southern France, called Caursines from the town of Cahors. By an ingenious plan they evaded the Usury Laws of the Church and were as big extortioners as the Jews. The Church did not allow usury, but it did allow compensation for loss. If you did not pay back your debt at the time promised the lender might suffer loss, and he was at liberty to charge you the difference (*id quod interest*) caused by the delay. Hence if he lent money for a short period free of usury, he could charge for your delay in not fulfilling the contract, and this charge was called ' interest '. By making the free period very short the difference between usury and interest almost disappeared in practice, though not in theory. It was sharp practice but legitimate, and as money was needed it was tolerated.

It has been greatly debated whether the Usury Laws were good or evil. They were probably good for the period for which they were made. Such opportunities for the use of capital as there were, were chiefly of the trading order, in which a man might fairly take the risks of commercial venture. Later, in the fifteenth century, as trade grew more complex, these laws became hampering, and as we shall see gradually dropped into abeyance. The one drawback to the system was that it tended to lock up money in the form of plate, and the free circulation of money is essential to flourishing commerce.

Summary. 1. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were a period of rapid growth both in trade and industry; the towns secured charters which freed them from the hampering bands of feudalism and created hundreds of self-governing communities throughout the land.

2. The towns on the royal demesne were the most successful in the struggle for freedom, and as a result the wealthiest and most powerful.

3. Trade and industry in the Middle Ages was strictly regulated. It was forced into certain channels for better control and ordinances were dominated by the idea that each article had its 'just price' and that it was wrong to extract more, even if the consumer were willing to pay.

4. Each town was a separate entity, there was no idea of national trade. Town negotiated with town for concessions, and without them the trader of one English town had no rights whatever in another.

5. The Merchant Gild was an association of all the traders in a town, who secured the sole right to buy and sell free of tolls. It controlled all trading matters and regulations, acted as arbitrator between members, protected members against other towns, and took the place of an insurance society against sickness and poverty. It was not identical with the municipality, though the two bodies must have had many members in common.

6. The Craft Gilds were associations of men and women of the same trade or industry. They, too, aimed at monopoly and control. The gild exercised strict supervision over its members to maintain a high standard of workmanship and to prevent competition. Their charitable and religious functions were also important. The corner-stone of their organization was the custom of apprenticeship, which secured a practical training and a moral education to all prospective burgesses. A constant supply of skilled workmen was kept up by its means. The gilds in the early days were democratic and there was no great accumulation of wealth. There was a struggle for power between the gilds and the municipality, which ended for the most part by the close

of the thirteenth century in the subordination, at least in theory, of the gild to the town magistrates, and the incorporation of the former in the government of the town as useful instruments of supervision and control.

7. Most industries had at least started in the thirteenth century, though methods of manufacture were still primitive. The districts that might be called industrial differed considerably from those of modern times, chiefly because the fuel was wood not coal, and the power used, if any, was water not steam.

8. Women took a share in trade and industry, and, generally speaking, on the same terms as men.

9. There were bodies of aliens in the country, usually under the protection of the Crown, though gradually most of them became absorbed in the nation. The Jews held a peculiar position, outcasts socially, but powerful as the only holders of capital and under the direct protection of the king. They owed their position mainly to mediaeval ideas on the subject of usury.

3. Trade, Home and Foreign

Markets. We have already made some slight references to markets and fairs, but during the period now under review the number of these increased enormously. A town could claim the right to hold a market only in two ways, either as a definite royal grant or by immemorial usage. During the thirteenth century there were 3,300 grants of markets and fairs. The former were not usually allowed within 5 or 6 miles of one another. It will be remembered that markets were weekly affairs (sometimes two days a week were allowed) and were mainly occupied in exchanging the products and supplying the current needs of the district. The articles sold would be hay, straw, faggots, timber, pigs, ale, coal, leather, gloves, furs, linen, cloth, corn and dairy produce. The tolls of a market were very valuable, as is shown by the war waged later between the university and the town of Oxford for control of them. They consisted of

a charge on every transaction both to buyer and seller. There also were stallages, or fees for the privilege of having a stall, and piccage, a charge for damage done to ground by erecting a booth.

Fairs. Fairs were on a much bigger scale than markets. They were granted by royal charter either to communities or to individuals for a certain limited number of days. A description of the second largest fair in England will be the best way of explaining the system. The ST. GILES'S FAIR outside Winchester was granted to the Bishop of Winchester by William II. At first held for three days, it was finally extended by Henry II to sixteen days from August 31 to September 15. The fair was opened by a procession of the bishop's officials round the city, the keys of whose gates were delivered to them and the weighing machine of the wool market closed till the fair was over. All buying and selling within the city was suspended, and then, followed by the mayor and bailiffs, the bishop's representatives rode out of the eastern gate and up St. Giles Hill. Here a special mayor, bailiff, and coroner were appointed to govern the city for the sixteen days on behalf of the bishop. The hill was quickly covered with booths and stalls, laid out in orderly fashion in streets, men from the same town keeping together in the same part. Merchants from Flanders, from Bristol, or elsewhere—each group had its own portion of ground. Then within this the men of the different trades kept together, goldsmiths in one row, cloth-dealers in another. For 7 miles round the fair was proclaimed and all other buying and selling ceased; even at Southampton nothing but victuals might be sold.

All who frequented the fair paid tolls, though London and Wallingford had a special position and men of the Merchant Gild of Winchester entered free. Dues on buying and selling, often a penny from each party, 4*d*. on every bale of wool weighed, made the fair no small part of the bishop's revenue. There was a court set up by the bishop to settle all disputes by 'law merchant', which consisted of legal customs and doctrines used by merchants throughout Europe. This court was known as the

'court of the dusty feet', 'pieds-poudreux', soon corrupted to 'Court of Pie-Powder'. In this court weights and measures were tested, the Assizes of Bread and Wine and Ale declared, disputes settled, and fraud penalized.

It must have been a lively scene; men of many nations and from all parts of southern England, of every trade and craft, chaffered and shouted against each other. Here came the lord's bailiff to lay in his year's store of iron and manufactured goods, cloth for his lord and his lady's use finer than English looms could weave or English dyers dye. Here, too, he could purchase salt and salted fish for winter stores, tar for his sheep, linen, fur, and kitchen utensils, all very much more cheaply than at the local markets. On September 15 the fair closed, wagons and packhorses streamed back over the roads, carrying to every corner of southern England the stores purchased by the buyers, while foreign merchants conveyed from Southampton port the wool and raw hides, that England provided in such quantity, to be worked up by continental craftsmen.

Stourbridge Fair outside Cambridge belonged to that town and was on an even larger scale. It enjoyed an international reputation and merchants came to it from all parts of Europe. Beginning on September 4, it lasted three weeks. It was arranged just as St. Giles's was, in streets and quarters, and its crowd of merchants was still more diverse. People came even from London to buy, though London had a continuous market and was the centre of all commerce. Among the foreigners were Venetians and Genoese with all the wares of the east, gold and jewels and spices, silks, velvets, and glass; Flamands from Bruges and Liège, Ghent, and Mechlin, with linens and lawns; Spaniards bringing iron and wine; Frenchmen, too, with this last as well as Greeks from Crete and the islands. From the Levant came men bringing currants, almonds, and raisins; from Norway pitch and tar, while the Hanse towns of Prussia brought furs and amber, copper, iron, bow-staves, and ornamental timber. These Hanse merchants, too, brought jewels from the East by the Russian route and even porcelain from China. English merchants

brought to sell load on load of wool, lead from Derbyshire, and, if harvests were good, barley from the eastern counties to export to Flanders.

Such was the fair in mediaeval times, an essential part of the nation's life, for centuries the great centre of trade in all the luxuries of existence and of the interchange of raw materials for manufactured goods.

Roads and Trade Routes. But if the fairs brought from all quarters so many merchants and such quantities of goods, how did they get there? Roads in the thirteenth century were bad, but not so bad as they were four centuries later. The main great Roman roads were still passable, neglected though they had been for a large part of 800 years, and the duty fell on each parish of maintaining both them and others. This duty was variously performed; it depended largely on the lord of the manor. The repair of bridges was part of the obligation known as the *trinoda necessitas* and not even tenants in 'frank almoign'[1] were exempt. But it does not follow that it was always properly performed. It was also regarded as a proper object of pious benefaction, and some of the Religious Gilds referred to in the last chapter had this for one of their objects. One thing helped to force the lords to keep the roads in repair: their estates were scattered all over the country and, as we have seen, they lived by passing with all their households from one to another. This scattering of estates was part of the plans of certain kings to prevent any great baron accumulating a large compact piece of territory and trying thereby to establish himself as independent of the king.

A journey from Oxford to London took a day in summer and two days in winter. Merton College had a manor in Northumberland and it took six days' travel to reach it. The roads must have been fairly good to allow this. At the same time there were plentiful instances of neglect, and travelling in winter, when streams flooded the road and holes and bogs were not infrequent, was often dangerous to man and beast.

[1] See p. 37.

Much use was made of water transit, most English rivers being navigable for barges in parts. Many towns, which we should now consider inland, such as Norwich, were flourishing ports, and there was considerable coasting trade. Newcastle traded in coal in the thirteenth century as far as Southampton and Scarborough had an extensive fishing trade, reaching even to Iceland.

Carriage was cheap; for heavy goods the charge was 1*d.* per mile per ton and it covered insurance. The conveyance of wine was more expensive, being 3½*d.* per mile per ton. There is an interesting picture in Rogers' *Six Centuries of Work and*

A COUNTRY CART

Wages, of the journey of the bailiff of Cuxham to London to buy mill-stones. It occurred in 1331, just a little later than our period. Cuxham lies towards Oxford, some forty-five miles from London. The journey over the Chiltern Hills through Wycombe and Uxbridge takes the best part of a day, for the bailiff travels with servants and horses. Arrived in the city or Southwark he puts up at one of the numerous inns and sallies forth to buy provisions for his party, since the inn supplied often only sleeping room. Early next day he goes down to the wharf to seek his mill-stones and finally finds five to suit him. Then he and the merchant adjourn to a tavern to argue prices. This is not done quickly nor cheaply, for five gallons of Bordeaux wine are consumed in the business. But at last they come to terms, exchange the luck penny, 'God's silver,' as evidence

of a bargain concluded, witnesses are called and the bailiff delivers his promise to pay. Next day the bailiff returns to his lord and reports progress. Some time later he returns, pays

MERCHANT WITH CART LOADED WITH MERCHANDISE
Shooting at the butts in the background.

£15 16*s.* 8*d.* for the five (multiply by twenty probably to get modern value) and sets about arranging for their carriage by water. Two days and more drink, not quite such expensive stuff this time since sailors and wharfingers do not expect wine from Bordeaux, are expended in striking the bargain and getting

the mill-stones on board. Dues are paid for wharfage and murage, to keep up the bank and the wall, and then the bailiff rides home once more after four days' absence. The vessel carrying the stones passes up the river, through swans and salmon fisheries, past Windsor and Maidenhead, where more murage is paid, and finally lands the stones at Henley. Here they are bored for use and carried in hired carts to Cuxham. Such journeys for all kinds of purposes must have been frequent; the need for the personal conduct of business was great. Merchants travelled with their wares; they did not sit in offices and conduct their business by letter, telegraph and telephone. Hence we may conclude that the roads, at least in summer, were passable to a race of hardy travellers, who asked and knew little of comfort and ease.

KING'S SEAL FOR RECOGNIZANCES OF DEBTS AT OXFORD. Temp. Rich. II, 1377–99.

The Staple. We have seen that markets and fairs were largely a device for securing control of trade and customs by the authorities. The same idea was carried still farther in an attempt to control not merely the place of sale, but the route which goods might take. As early as 1266 we find some city selected to which alone all goods exported out of England might be sent, and since wool was our chief export it is often referred to as the wool staple. There was much competition for it; Edward I placed it first at Dordrecht, then at Bruges. In 1297 he went farther and selected nine staple ports from which alone wool could be exported. The object was of course to secure the king's revenue, a large part of which came from an export duty on wool. If all exported wool had to pass through certain ports and be sold in one town, it was possible to see that its duty was paid and smuggling was made difficult. The merchants who dealt in this export trade were known

as Merchants of the Staple; they formed an association, had a monopoly of the trade, and were ruled by a mayor and alderman.

Foreign Trade. We have seen that the Englishman of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had no love for aliens, but he was to some extent obliged to tolerate their presence, since Englishmen had ceased to be adventurous seamen and at this period were only gradually regaining their position as oversea traders. Consequently most overseas trade, and all that from the Mediterranean, was in the hands of aliens. We have seen them at the fairs, and places like London and Southampton had many of them. The native townsman did his best to make trading difficult for them and to secure as much as possible of the profits for himself. On the other hand, the monarch found these aliens very valuable; they paid him highly for special privileges and lent him money in his need. So all through the thirteenth century we find a war waged, by the citizen to secure his monopoly of internal trade, by the alien to break through the traditions that hampered him. Backed by the Crown the alien generally won.

The object of the burgess was to prevent the alien touching the *internal* trade of the country. He did not want to drive the alien away altogether, for that would destroy his own export trade, but he wanted to secure for himself the position of middleman between the alien importer and the native consumer. For this object he imposed the following restrictions:

(*a*) The alien could only sell wholesale and to a burgess of the town, only on market days and in full publicity.

(*b*) On no account must the alien sell retail.

(*c*) He must not go inland with his goods.

(*d*) He must live, not in a house of his own, but as guest of an English host, and must not stay more than forty days.

Now we have seen that merchants did not act alone, they were members of powerful societies and early learnt that collective bargaining paid. As early as 1237 we find concessions being granted by the citizens of London to the merchants of Corbie

and Amiens as a whole, freeing them from most of these restrictions. At last by the Carta Mercatoria of 1303, Edward I abolished all the restrictions except that as to retail trade, and even that was allowed in the two valuable trades of merceries and spiceries. Also in case of disputes between aliens and burgesses, half the jury were to be chosen from merchants of the town to which the alien belonged.

The Flemish and Teutonic Hanses. But long before this, two powerful leagues of cities had secured for themselves in London positions of special privilege. The first was made up of cities of Flanders and northern France, seventeen towns in all. Those of France were Chalons, Reims, St. Quentin, Cambrai, Amiens and Beauvois. They were known as the Flemish Hanse, and had a house and quarters in London and a recognized status.

But more powerful and of much longer duration was the Hanse of the greater towns of northern Germany, which lasted till the days of Elizabeth. It originated with Cologne, which later, after a short period of competition, was joined and eventually dominated by the great Baltic cities of Lübeck and Dantzic, together with Hamburg and Brunswick. Their dwelling in London was known as the STEELYARD, and the community lived in an armoured camp and was a celibate society. It was strongly fortified, no married man might dwell there, and the members lived as a community with a common refectory. Its master was fully armed, and the whole block of buildings, dwelling, warehouse, wharf, and garden, was encircled by a wall. By generous gifts to the city for public purposes, such as the repair and maintenance of gates, they secured toleration from the burgesses. There were also German merchants at Boston and Lynn. In 1155 their trade consisted of lead, tin, fish, meat, fine wool and jet as exports, while they imported luxuries, silver and jewels. Corn travelled both ways, according as harvests varied in England and Prussia.

Trade Routes. Besides the trade with Flanders in wool and cloth, with France and Gascony in wine, with Ireland in slaves.

and with Scandinavia in timber, fish, and tar, there was also considerable trade with the great Italian cities. English wool found its way to Lucca and Florence via the Seine, the Rhone and Marseilles, or overland by Paris, Lyons and Turin. In 1284 most of the English monasteries agreed to sell all their wool to the Florentines.

Spiceries, silks and gems from India found their way to our western island by three principal routes :

(*a*) From India by water to Bagdad, up the Tigris and across the desert to Antioch.

(*b*) The second route was from Western India to Aden, across the desert to the Nile, down the river to Cairo and by canal to Alexandria. This route was safer, but the spices were apt to get damaged on it and the Sultan of Egypt exacted a toll of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent.

Both these routes were in the hands of the Venetians and Genoese.

(*c*) The third followed the same line as the first to the Tigris, then across the highlands of Armenia to Trebizond and the Black Sea, then by Kief and Novgorod to the Oder and the Baltic.

The Latin Conquest of Constantinople in the thirteenth century roused the fanaticism of the Mohammedan tribes of Asia Minor and so blocked the first route entirely and the third to an extent that made it dangerous though not impossible. It was the Turkish pressure that created a desire for an all-sea route to India, which led in the fifteenth century to the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope and of America.

Summary. 1. English trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was carried on by means of markets and fairs. All towns possessed the former, and there was a good number of the latter. The market was a weekly event and supplied local needs, the fair came once a year for a limited number of days and provided the chief mart for wholesale selling and for provision of stores.

2. Roads were not very good, but might have been worse. They were kept in repair as a charge on the parishes, but it was also necessary often to appeal to the piety or benevolence of men and communities to get extensive repairs done.

3. The authorities tried to control trade routes for the principal articles of commerce, especially of wool. This was done to secure proper supervision and also the king's customs. The Staple was part of such a scheme, whereby the trade was driven into the hands of certain merchants and carried on at a fixed place.

4. Foreign trade was almost entirely in the hands of aliens at this period. They were viewed with great hostility by the English traders and attempts made to circumscribe their activity. The king supported the aliens and early in the fourteenth century they had broken down the burgher monopoly. The Flemish and Teutonic Hanses were associations of certain cities that secured for their merchants special privileges at an early date.

4. Taxation—Money

We have seen[1] how in the eleventh century the king was expected to 'live of his own' and out of his vast feudal estates, together with certain other dues of immemorial custom, he had to provide for the public expenses of government and defence, as well as of his own household. But as time went on the expenses of government increased, especially when to England and Normandy were added the large continental possessions of the Angevin princes. Henry II enormously increased the efficiency of the central government and consequently added to its cost; his endless journeys up and down the land must alone have been a considerable item of the royal expenditure; Richard I was not exactly a cheap luxury—an absentee king in search of martial glory is apt to prove not worth his cost—and neither John nor Henry III did anything to mend matters. At the same time the revenue from feudal sources was decreasing, much land had been granted away from the crown and civil war and revolting barons from time to time caused loss and confusion in the collection of such dues as still existed. Hence we find kings like Henry II and Edward I seeking new methods of taxation that would not be injurious to the kingdom, and others like John resorting to tyrannous exactions and unscrupulous dealings.

New Sources of Taxation. The principal fresh sources of taxation devised during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were as follows. Some were not new, but merely developed into regular taxes from rights rarely exercised.

(*a*) Scutage. The first of these and the least permanent was scutage. It was introduced in 1159 and heralded the break-down of the essentially military feudal organization. The feudal host was obviously not a convenient instrument with which to wage war of any length or at any great distance from home. The tenants-in-chief were apt to have strong views on their

[1] See p. 26.

monarch's projects, and if they involved lengthy expeditions across the seas, they even ventured to claim that they were only bound to serve within the realm. So in 1159, when Henry II planned an expedition to far distant Toulouse, he decided to levy a charge on all knight's fees in all his possessions English and continental, excusing the knights in return from serving, and using the money to engage a host of mercenaries. In England the sum levied was £1 6*s.* 8*d.* (2 marks) on the knight's fee. In 1189 it was levied at 10*s.*, and under Henry III it rose to 3 marks. Even this commutation of service was not paid without opposition, and the resistance of the barons of the northern counties, who claimed that they should be exempt, since on them fell the defence of the northern border, had a good deal to do with the crisis of 1215. Scutage continued to be levied at intervals till 1322, when it was paid for the last time by bishops, clergy and women called to fight against the Scots.

(*b*) Tallage of the Royal Demesne. The right to tallage or tax his tenants was possessed by every feudal lord, including of course the king. In early times the king exercised it mainly for special occasions and special needs. As the richest towns were on the royal demesne, it was on the burgesses of these that the chief burden fell. Sometimes the demand was made on the rich merchants only, sometimes a bargain was made between the officers of the Exchequer and the town as a whole. After 1322 it also fell into disuse, the only trace of it remaining being the tenth paid by the towns as contrasted with the fifteenth paid by the country districts whenever Parliament granted a subsidy.

(*c*) Taxation of Movables. All feudal taxes fell on the holder of land, and not till late in the twelfth century was any attempt made to tax other property. In 1188 Henry II proposed to join the Crusade and looked round for means to raise the necessary money. At the time of the first Crusade, a century earlier, the Church had demanded a contribution from every man in proportion to his property of whatever kind, his oath

being taken that he was making a fair estimate. But Henry required something surer than an oath, even in an age when detected perjury involved excommunication. In 1181 he had adopted the method of the Domesday survey, of estimate by sworn jury, in order to organize the defence of the country. Combining now the precedent of the Church and the system recently adopted for the Assize of Arms, he and his Council levied a tax of one-tenth on every man's goods, land, stock, house and furniture. Certain things were excepted, such as the armour, horses and clothes of a knight, horses, books and clothes of clergy, also church furniture. Throughout the next century similar taxes were levied at intervals, sometimes a fifteenth, sometimes other fractions. The assessment was made often by elected representatives of knights in each shire. In 1334, however, an important change was made. By assessment in that year the total value of a tax of one-fifteenth and one-tenth on counties and towns respectively was estimated at some £39,000, and henceforth this assessment stood. It soon ceased to bear any real relation to one-fifteenth or one-tenth of the individual's property, but whenever Parliament voted the king a 'fifteenth and a tenth' it was taken to mean this sum of £39,000. Then, whatever a county or a town paid as its share in 1334 it continued to pay, the sum being shared up as fairly as might be among the dwellers in the area. If the sum of £39,000 was not sufficient to meet the king's needs then Parliament voted two fifteenths and tenths or more. Sometimes half a fifteenth and tenth sufficed. This custom belongs really to the next period of our history, but as practically no change in the form of taxation was made from 1334 to Tudor days, it seems well to finish the matter here.

(*d*) Customs. It will be remembered that one of the king's rights consisted in the power to commandeer his subjects' property for the royal use, paying a fixed price, often below the market value. This right of pre-emption [1] existed from earliest times and extended to all kinds of goods. Its primary object

[1] See p. 29.

was the supply of the king's household. Now it is no great extension of the idea that the king should claim the same right over merchandise sent for export from the kingdom, or luxuries like wine brought in from outside. Obviously, too, the ports were the easiest place from which to exercise this right. Probably, not certainly, for we have no actual record of the origin of such dues, the levies on exports and imports that we find existing in the twelfth century and known as 'Customs' arose in some such way. Again, the king was guardian of the realm, the gateways of which it was his right to loose or bar. With mediaeval ideas on the subject of aliens it is not surprising to find a levy on the goods exported and imported by these foreigners, and the fact that England held the monopoly of raw wool disguised and partially prevented the incidence of the export tax on the native producer. However they arose, there is no question that levies on exports and imports were an early part of the king's revenue.

Up to the year 1275 we find the following customs:

(*a*) The ANCIENT CUSTOMS on exported wool, woolfells, hides, lead and tin, the sum being fixed and customary.

(*b*) The RECTA PRISA on wines, being the royal right to one cask in 10, 2 in 20 or more, of all imported.

(*c*) Any advance on these two or extension to other goods was called a NEW CUSTOM.

(*d*) If these three did not suffice for the royal needs, the king levied a largely increased duty, which was promptly stigmatized as a MALTOLTE, or evil custom. This often reached as high as a fourth or more of the gross value. Sometimes it was levied in kind, and in this form might extend to a seizure of the whole of the goods.

But in 1275 the nation struck a bargain with the king and the Ancient Custom was fixed at 6*s.* 8*d.* on every sack of wool and every 300 woolfells, and 13*s.* 4*d.* on every last of hides, and these customs remained always, irrespective of any other grants made to the king. In 1297 Edward I tried to increase the duty to 3 marks, but the country called this a maltolte and in the

Confirmatio Cartarum the king undertook to levy no Customs without the consent of Parliament beyond those settled in 1275. The maltolte thus became a subsidy and is again and again granted by Parliament at need. The other ancient right of the king to bar the gates to strangers was quite in line with the desires of the nation; the more the king made it difficult for aliens, the more the native merchant approved; the larger the sum exacted from them the less would the king demand from his own subjects. But there is a point at which such taxation must prevent the stranger coming at all, and as yet the English merchant needed him. So in 1303 by the CARTA MERCATORIA Edward struck a bargain with the aliens also. Instead of prisage they offered 2*s.* on every tun of wine imported, they would pay 3*s.* 4*d.* per sack of wool above the ancient custom and also extra on cloth and wax, together with a poundage of 3*d.* in the £ on all goods exported or imported. These were known henceforth as the NEW CUSTOMS. They were paid by aliens only. An offer to commute prisage of wine in the same way to English merchants was scornfully refused, to their great loss later when wine trebled in price. There were thus at the beginning of the fourteenth century five branches of the customs, viz.:

(*a*) The Ancient Customs as fixed in 1275. These needed no parliamentary sanction, but were levied continuously.

(*b*) The Recta Prisa on wine imported by natives.

(*c*) The New Customs paid by aliens, as agreed in 1303.

(*d*) Subsidies granted by Parliament, limited in amount and time. They often took the form of a tax on wool, or of tunnage and poundage, i. e. a levy on every tun of wine and every pound's worth of merchandise passing through the ports.

(*e*) Purveyance, now greatly limited by force of public opinion and supposed not to exceed the needs of the king's household.

All these continued much the same up to the end of the fifteenth century.

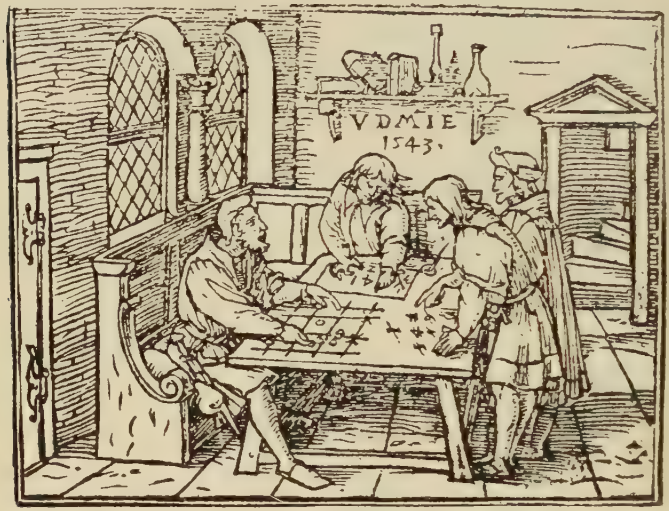
Methods of Collection—Control—Audit. The collection of all the various dues in each county was made for the most part

by the sheriff. All the monies from the royal demesne, the profits of justice, the farms of the towns, danegeld, scutage and tallage were all collected by the sheriff of the county, who rendered account of them. In the twelfth century only some 14 boroughs and a few honours[1] accounted separately for their dues and not through the sheriff. The Customs were collected by customers, who supervised all the merchandise going in and out of the country and saw weighed the sacks of wool and bales of hides and sealed them with the coket, an impression on a thin disk of heated lead which would easily adhere to the canvas. Wax began to be used instead about the time of Edward IV.

So much for the collection—what of the accounts kept? How did the statesmen of the early Middle Ages meet the problem of making sure that the Government received the monies levied in its name? We do not know how it was accomplished before the twelfth century, but about 1118 the Exchequer was devised and we have a treatise describing its working, written about 1177 by Richard the Treasurer, written, too, with the object of making clear in every detail the scheme for receiving and entering the revenue returns. The Exchequer was a Court for the receipt of monies and for the book-keeping, as we should now call it, necessary to record the receipt. It met at Westminster twice a year at Easter and at Michaelmas. It took its name from a chequered cloth used for the calculations, and it was this chequered cloth, a new device introduced early in the twelfth century, that revolutionized the system of accounts. It was a new method of calculating, based on the abacus. It must be remembered that numbers were written in Roman figures, and you have only to try to do a simple sum in them, without the help of our modern Arabic numerals, to realize the extreme difficulty. The abacus was a scheme to make things easier. On a table of sand or a black cloth rule columns; the columns may represent units, tens, hundreds, thousands, or they may represent £ *s.* *d.* Then put in each column counters for as many tens or hundreds, &c. as you want. No counters in a column

[1] See p. 37.

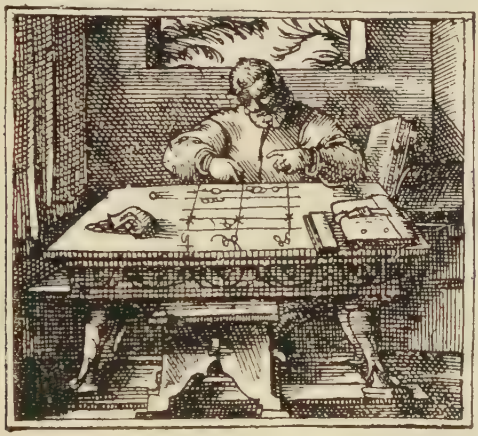
stood for zero, but the idea of a figure for zero had not yet reached Europe from the Arabs. So if you wanted to represent any number, say 207, you could only do it by using 3 columns and putting 2 counters in the first, none in the second, and seven in the third; but you had to have the columns. At the Exchequer you were dealing with £ *s.* *d.* and the arrangement was as follows. A table 10 ft. by 5 ft. had round it a ledge to



THREE METHODS OF CALCULATING: with casting-counters, ciphering on paper with pen and ink, and reckoning with chalk.

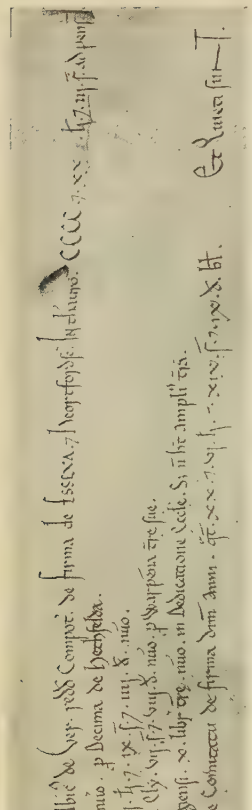
prevent the counters rolling off, over the table was spread a cloth ruled in columns either 9 inches or a foot wide and with certain horizontal lines that need not concern us. The result was like a chess board and hence the name. Round this board were seated a number of important people. Imagine the table placed at the top of a room, its long sides parallel to the end of the room. At the right-hand end of the table sat the Justiciar, the most important man in the kingdom after the king, on his right and left the Bishop of Winchester and the Chancellor.

Down the long side of the table, facing the room, were the Treasurer and the various writers of the rolls in which the receipts were entered. One wrote the Great Roll, now called the Pipe Roll, and another made a duplicate for the Chancellor. The Chancellor's clerk overlooked this latter to see it was correct, and as in course of time the Chancellor became too busy to attend, the whole duty fell on the Chancellor's clerk, who eventually became known as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Facing the writers on the other long side of the table, with their backs



RECKONING WITH CASTING COUNTERS

to the room, were the people who did the actual calculations and gave the receipts. At the bottom end of the table sat the sheriff and his clerk. There were others present about whom we will not trouble. The sheriff began by reading out the sums he had expended in the king's name, and as each was allowed, the calculator laid on the table, in the proper columns, counters representing the sums. There were seven columns for pence, shillings, pounds, scores of pounds, hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands. When all the sheriff's outgoings were placed on the table, above them was placed the sum due from him, and then the subtraction made by taking away the counters in pairs



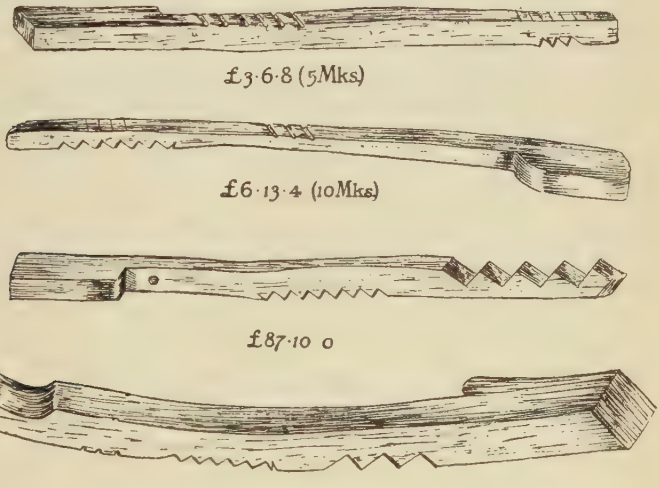
PIPE ROLL I, M. II. Specimen of Pipe Rolls, A. D. 1130.

one from above and one from below, till either set, receipts or expenditure, had none left. The result was then entered in the roll, and a receipt given to the sheriff.

The receipts would be strange to us in these days. They were called tallies and consisted of a square stick of hazel wood about 8 inches long. There was a hole bored at the end so that they could be strung on a rod and filed. The receipt was recorded by cutting out notches down each edge of the wood. A cut as broad as the palm of your hand stood for £1,000, the breadth of your thumb for £100, of your little finger for a score, one pound was represented as the width of a swelling barleycorn, a shilling slightly smaller, and pennies by mere cuts. The name was recorded on the tally, which was then split nearly as far as the bored hole. The sheriff kept the larger piece called the stock, the Exchequer the smaller called the foil. To prove receipt the two pieces were brought together and were shown to match or tally exactly. It was a simple and convenient form of receipt and fraud was almost impossible. It is interesting to note the survival of the words stock and foil. Until 100 years ago the Bank of England gave tallies as receipts for loan. So, if you lent them money, you received the

stock of a tally and were said to hold Bank stock for so much. The word foil persists in the 'counterfoil' of a cheque. Some thirteenth-century exchequer tallies still exist in the Record Office.

How did the Sheriff pay his dues? If you go to a bank to cash a cheque, you will be asked politely 'How will you take it?' whereby the clerk means will you have notes or gold or



STOCKS OF THIRTEENTH-CENTURY EXCHEQUER TALLIES

silver? How did the Exchequer take it? In silver pennies, for there was nothing else. Now the silver penny of the twelfth century was not a very sure sort of coin, for it got badly damaged in use. So there were two ways of securing that the government should not lose. If the sheriff paid by tale, i.e. by counting the coins, then a first test was made by weighing some of the coins against a pound weight. There should be 240 pennies to the pound; if it required more than 246 then the money was refused altogether. But if the money proved thus of fair value it was

accepted, only the sheriff had to pay one extra shilling in the pound. Sometimes the sheriff was expected to pay not by tale but by weight, and then it was necessary to make sure against false coins. To do this 44 shillings' worth was selected and 20 of these tested by being melted and compared with standard silver. Or, if this assay was not made, the sheriff might be charged an average of 6*d.* in the pound instead.

It will, of course, have occurred to you that transporting thousands of pounds' worth of silver from, say, Nottingham to Westminster must have been costly and dangerous. Partly to meet this difficulty, partly as a way of anticipating the royal revenue, creditors of the Crown were often paid by 'assignments' on the customers or the sheriff. Instead of the creditor being paid out of the money in the Treasury, he was given a writ authorizing the sheriff or the customer to pay so much out of the royal receipts now in his hands. This saved, perhaps, journeys to the creditor and much movement of coins by the sheriff. It was, however, apt to become a dodge for postponing payment, for often the customer or the sheriff had not, or said he had not, funds sufficient in hand to pay, and you might wait long years or sometimes never get any money at all.

Money. We said above that the only coin was the silver penny and this was true all through this period. We read about marks (value 13*s.* 4*d.*), pounds and shillings, but no such coins existed until the time of Henry VII; they were merely names. The English penny was known abroad as the esterlin; it had a good reputation and was worth 2 and 4 times as much as continental ones. Hence a sum of 240 pennies was one pound of sterlings, and so to-day £1 sterling means one pound English.

As this is the first time we have considered money, it may be well to say a few words on its history. In the early days of barter money was chiefly a means of storing value, not a measure of exchange. But even in the earliest day occasional need for money arose, such as the arrival of traders with jewels or fine robes, or a wer-gild had to be paid. Money can, of course, be anything, for it is only a standard by which value is measured;

it has often been cattle, in Africa cowrie shells have been used, Sparta preferred iron. But it soon became evident that silver and gold were compact, easily handled, not easily destroyed and, consequently, more convenient than most things for this purpose.

The first coinage after the Fall of Rome was struck by the Merovingian kings of the Franks, and England followed soon after by coining silver coins called 'sceattas' for the Frisian trade. The silver penny was coined by Offa in the eighth century. Coinage was a royal prerogative and in England the kings successfully kept their right, while on the Continent half the feudal lords claimed and exercised it. No English king until Henry VIII was guilty of debasing it, indeed they all made great efforts to secure its purity. In early days there were many moneyers in the kingdom and apparently most of them dishonest, for Henry I in 1125 took vengeance on the whole company of them by enforcing the penalty of mutilation of the right hand on every one. New dies were often issued by the government, but it was difficult to prevent clipping of coins, which differed often in size and had no milled edge.

Since the English coinage was so much better than the foreign it was important to keep out the bad and retain the good, for if both are allowed the bad invariably takes the place of the good, which rapidly disappears either into hoards or the melting pot. Consequently exportation of coin or bullion or even of plate was forbidden generally throughout the Middle Ages. It was not that they held any theory about increasing the power of the nation by increasing its money reserve, but that there really was not a great supply and it was necessary to preserve it. In an age too when prices were regulated, it was necessary that the money standard should be steady and constant; also if money gets scarce prices sink and may even go below the level that makes it worth while to produce.

Summary. 1. New sources of taxation had to be found in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, owing to decrease of feudal dues and increase of the cost of government. The

principal new taxes were: (*a*) Scutage 1159 to 1322; (*b*) Tallage of royal demesne, also ceased after 1322; (*c*) Taxation of movables, introduced in 1188 and fixed in amount in 1334; (*d*) Customs, largely extended and regularized.

2. The collection of these taxes fell on the sheriff and the royal 'customers'.

3. The accounts were kept at the Exchequer, where a special system for receiving, receipting, and recording the payments was devised early in the twelfth century.

4. The coinage remained almost the same throughout the Middle Ages, consisting chiefly of silver pennies. Much care was taken to keep up the standard and value of English coins and to prevent them being supplemented by baser foreign ones.

PART III

THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

1. The Decay of Villeinage and the Breakdown of the Feudal System

Commutation of Labour Services. When we were speaking of the cotters in Part II, we said that their position was interesting because they became the nucleus of a class of wage-earning labourers. Let us see how and when the change took place. The cotters had some five acres of land from which to draw a livelihood for their families, and unless they could add to it in some way they were likely to starve. On the other hand, the lord often found that the labour he got from his villeins was difficult to supervise and troublesome to exact. Also, the richer villeins were glad to get out of their services if they could and devote themselves to their own land. So at an early date we find two things :

(*a*) The villein may *find* the labour instead of performing it himself.

(*b*) The lord takes money instead of labour service and uses it to hire his own labourers.

The second plan is called *commutation of labour rents*. There is a case as early as 1110, but it does not appear often till well on in the thirteenth century. For some time the services had had a money value attached to them as fines in cases where the villeins neglected them, so it was not difficult to make the change. Both parties gained by it. The villeins could devote their time to their own fields, and the lord was free to get labour when and how he pleased. The first services to get commuted were the week-work of the villeins, later came those of the cotters, and last of all the boon-works.[1] These last the lord was

[1] See p. 6.

reluctant to part with, because in times of harvest, unless he could get the whole village to work for him, there was danger of the crops being lost, for there were no extra sources of labour from which to draw.

But even these boon-days went at last and by 1327 commutation of all services was common. The process was, however, gradual and labour rents survived till the late sixteenth century, in Cumberland and Northumberland even till the eighteenth and nineteenth. It has been said that both parties gained, but we shall see presently that in the end, owing to events no one could foresee, the labourers scored most. At first the lords were anxious for the change and sometimes even forced it on their tenants, but it must be remembered that the lords retained their rights and could, and did, adopt one plan or the other as suited them. But on the whole the movement was towards freedom, and indeed the latter part of the thirteenth century was a time of prosperity for all. This was largely due to the wise and strong government of Edward I.

Alienation of demesne. Another change began in the thirteenth century, developed all through the fourteenth, and by 1500 had altered the land tenure of a large part of the country. This was the plan of letting the demesne in enclosed farms, which were soon shown to be more profitable than open-field agriculture. The lord also began to increase his demesne by enclosing parts of the waste and turning it into arable land. This he had the legal right to do, but it produced bitter opposition. The whole feeling of the Middle Ages was against the idea that a man could do what he chose with his own. He was entitled to get a fair living out of it according to his station of life, but to pile up a huge fortune at the expense of the poor was a defiance of public opinion that only a few dared. The STATUTE OF MERTON in 1236 expressly forbade the lord to take more of the common pasture than would leave enough for the sheep and cattle of the freehold tenants, but it did allow his right to enclose up to that limit.

Famine and Pestilence.—The Black Death. The prosperity

of the thirteenth century, a prosperity still evident to us in the beautiful and costly churches and abbeys which have come down to us from that period either intact or in ruins, was followed by a disastrous era of famine and war and pestilence. In the years 1315 and 1316 was a great failure of the harvest. In 1316 from Michaelmas to Christmas, it is said, it rained without a day's intermission. The harvest failed utterly, and many died of starvation. A murrain among the cattle followed. The unhealthy ways of living, prevalent among all classes of society, brought disease which underfed bodies could not resist and more still died thus. But for the moment the nation recovered and wages rose some 20 per cent. owing to scarcity of hands; harvests were good, and in 1337 the nation plunged recklessly into a war with France. As is usually the case, the early years of a war not fought on our own land brought prosperity. It employed numbers of men as soldiers, occupied barons of the fiercer sort, giving their tenants a rest from what was often a heavy tyranny, and in the general prosperity the taxation was hardly felt. Many villeins prospered and bought their freedom with money which was legally their lord's, according to lawyer's theories, but which the custom of the manor, and possibly his need of ready cash to pay his soldiers, forced the lord to accept.

But this prosperity was to receive a fearful check. In 1348 a new and terrible pestilence made its appearance. It is said to have arisen in China, spread westward and leapt on Europe like a resistless flood. Before a new disease nations are liable to go down even to extinction, and European civilization nearly succumbed to this. Our forefathers called it the Black Death, and we know it still in the East as the Plague. It attacked all classes alike and seemed most fatal to the young and strong. The pestilence spread throughout Europe, and even to Iceland and Greenland; it is estimated to have claimed 25 million victims. It appeared in England on August 1, 1348, in seaport towns of Dorsetshire, travelled west and north to Bristol. In vain the citizens of Gloucester closed their gates to travellers

from the south, the terror reached Oxford and was in London by November, in Norwich in January, and by the end of 1349 raiding troopers had carried it back to Scotland. The mortality was appalling, though the numbers given by contemporary writers are incredible. There is no doubt, however, that at least one-third and probably half of the entire population perished.

Now it is obvious that a nation cannot lose even one-third of its population without profoundly modifying its economy. Whole households had disappeared, land lay idle with no heir to claim it, rich and poor alike were faced with the problem of there being only one man where there had been two. In some places even whole villages had disappeared. The principal results may be summarized as follows :

THE MERCHANT

(*a*) There was an unheard-of scarcity of labour with the result that wages rose, of men by 50 per cent. and of women by 100 per cent. They had been rising before 1348, as we saw, but nothing like this. In many places labour could not be got at all and the land lay untilled.

(*b*) The money possessed by each survivor was doubled since the population was halved, and as prices of the necessaries of life, unlike those of luxuries, did not rise greatly, the poor in particular were more prosperous.

(*c*) The small freeholder, who worked his land by his own labour and that of his family, was able to buy land cheap from a lord who could not afford to work it with hired labour at the price now demanded, so he prospered.

(*d*) On the other hand, as a result of the rise of the cost of labour the lord was less willing to commute services, and if he

did he valued them more highly, and for some would only accept a money-rent on a tenure which agreed that if any one came forward offering the old services, then the tenant should surrender the land to him. This made the villeins discontented.

(*e*) The villeins, besides seeing the labourers prospering, found themselves hard put to it to cultivate their land or to pay their rent, whether in service or money, for the household was halved but the rent remained the same. Many villeins threw up their holdings in disgust and migrated to the towns.

It will be obvious that the landlord was in a parlous state. All the luxuries of life, everything that depended on skilled labour increased in price; unless he were prepared to alter his standard of living, he must find some means of getting cheaper labour. On the other hand, the labourer saw his chance and took it. He combined, he formed secret societies, and if the lord refused his demands, he left the manor and went to work for some one who would pay what he asked. Legally he could not do this, but whom was the lord to send to fetch him back? he had no men to spare and a residence of a year and a day in a town made the fugitive free; if he fled to the cloister or the war, neither church nor army gave him up easily. It was not only that the landlords were in a quandary, there was a very real danger that the country might suffer seriously by land going out of cultivation.

THE REEVE

Statutes of Labourers. As early as 1349 the government stepped in and issued an Ordinance, which in 1351 was converted into a Statute. These were the first attempts to regulate by law the economic arrangements of the manor. The principal measures were:

(*a*) All labourers were to work for the rates current in 1346, and no landowner was to pay more, under penalty. The labourers named were carters, ploughmen, shepherds, swineherds and 'all other servants'. The lord of their manor had first claim on them, after that they must work for any who hired them. 'None shall go out of the town where he dwelleth in the winter to serve the summer' so long as he can find work where he is.

(*b*) An attempt was made to fix the price of victuals.

In 1360 the Act was renewed with increased penalties; imprisonment was substituted for a fine for accepting higher wages or refusing the low ones, and labourers who went to another country to escape compulsion were outlawed and, if captured, branded with an F 'for their falsity'. Later, no artificer, labourer, or servant was to leave the hundred where he dwelt without a certificate authorizing him or her to do so; if he did, he was liable to be placed in the stocks. In 1368 the Act was again repeated, and in 1388 further attempts to keep the labourer on the land were made. Craftsmen were to work in harvest time, when called on, and *any boy or girl who had worked on the land before he was twelve years old was not to leave it for any other occupation.* The Act further assessed wages for the whole country, but this proved impracticable, and in 1389 Justices of the Peace were appointed to assess them locally. Time after time were these Acts renewed but, as the preamble of the next Act usually tells us, with small result. The last was passed in 1496. All sorts of schemes were put forward and every kind of compulsion resorted to, still the drift to the towns went on though apparently great efforts were made to enforce the law.

THE MAN OF LAWE

One notable feature of the fifteenth century is the practical disappearance of women from agriculture, and the tax returns of 1377–81 give us one reason why. For there we find that women craft workers, websters, dyers, brewsters, and innkeepers pay taxes from 6*d.* to 1*s.*, while in agriculture the actual farmers alone pay 1*s.*, the woman agricultural labourer is assessed at the minimum groat. So the women also drifted to the towns, or spent their time in home industries for which the luxury of the nobles gave ample scope and a greater reward. The late fourteenth century was a time of great splendour, of pageants and shows and the most elaborate dress, for the continental war, while it drained the country by taxation, enriched the few by the loot of the fair lands of France.

THE SOMNOUR

It will naturally occur to us to ask, did these laws against the labourer succeed? The answer is, partially. Their constant repetition shows they did not succeed wholly—wages rose in spite of them, and even the landowners defied them in the scramble for workers. But it seems probable that without them, wages would have soared far higher. Workmen combined, in stealth and secrecy for combination was illegal, and when the pressure became too strong in one district the more enterprising fled to another. None the less we have ample record that the penalties were enforced and no doubt overawed many.

One effect of these statutes their originators certainly did not foresee, they helped considerably to break up the manor. For they admitted the claim of other lords to the services of the labourer; if his own lord had no use for him he was to work for another. The integrity of the manor no longer existed.

As to the equity of these laws, there can hardly be two opinions. They were passed by a parliament of landowners in their own interest, and the wages were fixed by Justices of the Peace

drawn from the landowning class; it was class legislation of the worst kind; they set a precedent that was only too gladly followed and each class in turn, as it gained control of the government, set to work to secure its own prosperity and to exploit those whose voice could only be heard in occasional riot and rebellion.

The Great Revolt. But for the moment the labourer was prospering and his success made him increase his demands on life. There is a limit below which struggle is not merely hopeless

THE RICH AT DINNER, fourteenth century.

but impossible. One of the causes of the Great Revolt in 1381 was that the labourer was prospering as he never had before, and new hopes and ambitions were stirring within him. The attempts of the landlords to frustrate his hopes, by enforcing the Statutes of Labourers, and still more by refusing further commutations of service rents or renewal of old ones, were rapidly rousing the villeinage to seething indignation. Other causes were:

(*a*) The mismanagement of the war with France, a war which the whole nation refused to see as wasteful and useless. It was firmly fixed in the minds of all classes that, but for treachery and incompetence in high places, France could be conquered,

and it would have been impossible to convince them that even had that desirable event occurred England would have been worse off rather than better—though they might have been hard put to it to say in what way individual Englishmen would have gained by it. It is probably this political aspect of the rebellion that accounts for the large number of freemen and even men of standing and rank that took part in it.

(*b*) It is now fairly certain that Wyclif and his 'poor priests' had nothing to do with it, and Wyclif's own attitude certainly

DOMESTIC COSTUME, fifteenth century.

recognized the rights of property. But it is probable that his attacks on the wealth of the church and his general ideas of freedom had effects outside the world of religion and helped to upset the general acquiescence in things as they were. The challenge of one established order soon spreads to others, often in ways most abhorrent to the original rebel.

(*c*) The immediate spark that fired the train was the Poll Tax of 1380. The government finance was bad, the court extravagant, and the war wasteful. The customs revenue fell owing to troubles in Flanders, which country took most of our

wool. In 1377 a graduated poll tax, varying from 4*d.* a head to £6 3*s.* 8*d.*, had been levied and paid. In 1380 a similar tax of 1*s.* on every one was levied, but it was to be so adjusted locally that the rich man paid more than the poor. The difference made, however, was not large and the tax pressed heavily on the poorer classes. A shilling represented some three or four days' work, say 10*s.* to 15*s.* at the present day, and this on every member of the household over fifteen years of age. The nation met the exaction by a strange and unexpected method. It forced or bribed the commissioners to wink at false returns and whole villages conspired to suppress the existence of from one-quarter to one-third of their numbers. The fraud was too impudent and too general to succeed, and the government sent special investigators to detect the culprits. Blind to the seething discontent, they omitted to protect their commissioners, and on the murder of one or two of them the whole of the eastern counties blazed into rebellion. We do not know how it was planned, but its almost simultaneous character suggests that it was not altogether unprepared. It was very well organized, and, as rebellions go, excellently controlled in many districts. It was for the most part confined to the eastern and home counties, though there were sporadic riots in Somerset and Yorkshire. These latter seem to have had little connexion with the main movement. The north was cut off largely by a belt of forest and marsh stretching from Norwich to the mouth of the Mersey. It also seems to have been ahead of the south and east in commutation of labour rents for money. Not a few of the towns joined in; in these the grievances were akin to, though differing in detail from, those of the rural population. The revolt called out some remarkable leaders, such as Wat Tyler and Geoffrey Litster; the latter organized Norfolk in a way to excite our admiration. The tale of them has reached us through their bitter enemies the monks, but that some of them were disinterested resisters of oppression is clear. William Grindcobbe was released by the Abbot of St. Albans in the hope that he would buy his life by inducing his followers to disperse.

Even the slandering monk cannot disguise the beauty of the address of this 'son of Belial'. 'Friends,' he is reported to have said, 'who, after so long an age of oppression, have at last won yourselves a short breath of freedom, hold firm while you can, and have no thought of me or what I may suffer. For if I die for the cause of the liberty we have won, I shall think myself happy to end my life as a martyr. Act now as you would have acted supposing that I had been beheaded at Hertford yesterday.'[1] Chivalry in the fourteenth century was rarely extended to any outside the class of its professor, and seldom indeed did it penetrate the cloister. The St. Albans monk, who tells the story, gloats over the brutal and disgusting penalty this hero and his friends paid for their misdeeds. Several of the leaders were probably old soldiers, which would account for the unusual discipline. This was no Jacquerie, an orgy of loot and vengeance that had occurred in France thirteen years before; it was organized revolt with definite aims and considerable self-control. Both the proceedings and the demands of the rebels show this.

Their proceedings usually were:

(*a*) Destruction of the Court Rolls, which contained the evidence of the villein services and dues.

(*b*) Demand for charters of freedom from lords and especially from abbots and priors. The abbots in particular held out against the demands of the towns.

(*c*) The killing of most of the lawyers they could lay their hands on; partly, no doubt, because legal ingenuity had been used in the interest of the landowner rather than of the labourer, partly in that unreasoning hatred and fear of an art he does not understand common in all ages to the ignorant. There were doubtless many Mr. Tullivers then as now.

The political factor in the revolt was shown by the murder of Archbishop Sudbury and the Treasurer and the sacking of John of Gaunt's palace, the Savoy.

The rebels made four principal demands:

(*a*) All villeinage to be abolished, especially the incidents of

[1] Oman, *The Great Revolt*, p. 97.

merchet (fine on marrying one's daughter), heriot (fine on taking up one's heritage), and the dues demanded when one sold one's stock.

(*b*) All land to be let at a perpetual money rent of 4*d*. an acre. This was below the average value of land in 1381.

(*c*) That there should be no restriction on buying and selling.

(*d*) A general amnesty.

In the panic that seized the government, who were apparently taken unawares, these demands were granted and pledges given; but when the rebels dispersed, carrying with them the coveted charters and manumissions, all such pledges were shamelessly broken. There seems some reason to think that the government hesitated and was half inclined to make concessions; but they threw the onus of a decision on parliament and they could have had little doubt of the answer. A parliament of landowners is usually reactionary, certainly in England has never shown itself capable of rising above the interests of its class. All concessions were repudiated, all illegal murders on the part of those who put down the rebellion justified, and the members as a body repudiated any suggestion that they might be willing to free their serfs. A sort of amnesty was granted, 287 persons and the town of Bury St. Edmunds being excepted by name. Other towns bought their pardon by a heavy fine. According to the ideas of the time this was not outrageous vengeance and many of the 287 eventually were pardoned.

Result. How far, if at all, did the Revolt succeed? On this point historians differ in every possible degree. Some say that the rebels secured within the next century all they asked, others that the revolt neither hastened nor retarded the freedom of the serf. The truth is probably somewhere between. Villeinage was dying before 1381, but the process was slow; it is not unlikely that the revolt hastened its decease. For the moment reaction set in and the lot of the serf became heavier, but when the first rage of indignation was over the landlord found himself confronted with all the old troubles, economic in origin, which he was powerless to alter, while he had a wholesome memory of

a certain month of June in 1381 when revolted labour held a dagger at his throat. Openly he blustered and passed his Acts against the labourer, practically he gave in or took measures in another direction of which we must speak presently. The labourer was beaten, and for the moment beaten badly, but he too had a memory of the great year. He had seen the government reduced to ineptitude by panic, he had tested his power, things could never be quite so bad again. It must not be forgotten that a revolt of labourers was a far more serious matter in the fourteenth century than now, when a handful of soldiers with a machine-gun can clear a street. The fathers of Wat Tyler's men had won Crecy armed merely with bow and arrows, and their sons were to show on the field of Agincourt that the labourer was as good a man as the knight. It is significant that the next revolt, of Jack Cade in 1450, was entirely political and not social. Above all, the charters extorted from terrified overlords in 1381 became models towards which the bargaining tenant worked. From whatever cause it came the doom of villeinage had sounded. By the end of the fifteenth century it is no longer the customary tenure, as early as 1460 the royal courts are protecting the villein against his lord, and small freeholders are numerous in the land. The villein becomes the *copyholder*, holding his land for a money rent by tenure based on a copy of the Court Roll of his manor.

The Landlord's Position at the End of the Fourteenth Century. The economic changes of the three centuries since Domesday are well illustrated in the story of the Berkeley family in the county of Gloucester. From 1189, when Maurice de Berkeley was lord of many manors in Gloucester, Somerset, and Essex, till 1326 the first four heads of the family steadily pursued the policy of converting customary tenancies into freeholds at a quit rent, high for the time. They also enclosed the waste and converted it in the same way. The demesne they cultivated as a home farm, with its own labourers, its reeve, and its bailiff. But the third Lord Berkeley, who ruled from 1326–61, was a forerunner of Townshend and the farmer nobles of the eighteenth century, and we have a striking and unusual picture of a feudal

baron attending all the markets and fairs of the neighbourhood, and buying and selling corn and stock. He foresaw that land would rise rather than fall in value, and bought back his freeholds,

A FARM IN FEBRUARY

letting them on lease. His successors followed the same policy and after 1385 extended it to the demesne. 'Then', says the seventeenth-century chronicler of the Berkeleys, 'began the times to alter, and hee with them (much occasioned by the insurrection of Wat Tyler and generally of all the commons in the land), and then instead of manuring his demesnes in each

manor with his own servants' oxen, kine, sheep, poultry, and the like, under the oversight of the Reeves of the manors. . . . This lord began to joyst and tack in other men's cattle into his pasture grounds by the week, month, and quarter: and to sell his meadow grounds by the acre. And after in the time of Henry IV let out by the year still more and more by the acre as he found chapmen and price to his liking.' Here we see the

LABOURERS AND ARTIFICERS OF THE XVTH CENTURY

process of a line of intelligent landowners adapting themselves to the economic conditions of their times.

1. Possessed of large demesnes, they were able to keep a number of servants, cotters, and men who, villeins by birth, yet had no land (younger sons and such). Thus supplied with labour, they commuted their villeins' services and made them freeholders at a rent.

2. In the fourteenth century these rents ceased to represent the value of the land, so the lord bought it back and leased it at a higher rent for a term of years.

3. Labour getting scarce, he did the same with his demesne lands.

Besides these plans adopted by the Berkeleys, two other remedies were found to meet the changed conditions :

4. Many let their demesne to tenants with little or no capital, on a stock and land lease, the tenant renting the stock as well as the land. This enabled the poorer but skilled farmer to take up land ; with luck he prospered and often became a free-holder.

All the above changes show the landlord 'ceasing to be a patriarchal farmer and becoming a mere rent receiver'.[1] One unfortunate result of this was the increase of penniless younger sons. The inheritance being now all land, which passed strictly by primogeniture, the younger son of the higher noble became a charge on the state for whom court office had to be found ; the younger son of the lesser noble took to adventure, became a free lance or mere mercenary, often little less than a brigand. Both types became a public nuisance.

5. But a fifth remedy awaited the perplexed landowner, if he were enterprising enough to use it. Labour was scarce and sheep farming, which required little, was very profitable. In the north-west this change began early, for the damper west was never good for wheat growing. The change was easy to make, as the villages were small hamlets and the two- and three-field system did not exist there. It was, too, a thinly populated district and consequently even large sheep-walks found employment for most of the population. But when about the middle of the fifteenth century, in the corn-growing districts of the south and east, the great landlords began to enclose for sheep farms, the cry of the ousted peasantry got louder and louder and distress increased as the century drew to a close.

Enclosures. The general term enclosures covers three different processes, all of which begin about this time :

(*a*) Enclosure of the land in strips, by exchange and purchase, so that a villein could have his farm in two or three parts instead

[1] Prothero, *History of English Farming*, p. 46.

of scattered in some thirty or sixty strips all over the common fields. The process was one of equitable exchange and tended towards improved farming.

(*b*) Enclosures of common or waste by the lord, with or without the consent of the freeholders. This often pressed heavily on the poorer villeins, who lost common rights, but if the enclosed land was turned into arable it provided more work for the cotter and labourer.

(*c*) Enclosure of demesne and turning it into sheep walks. This produced a serious economic disturbance. The description given by Sir Thomas More in 1516 is probably not exaggerated, though it must be remembered that the enclosures were by no means universal and that the bulk of the land remained in the south and midlands in open fields. 'Your shepe, that were wont to be so myke and tame, and so smal eaters, now, as I heare saie be become so greate devowerers, and so wylde, that they eate up and swallow down the very men themselfes. They consume, destroy, and devoure hole fieldes, houses, and cities. For looke in what partes of the realm doth growe the fynyst and therefore the dearest woll, there noble and gentleman, yea and certayn Abbottes, holy men God wote, not contenting themselfes with the yearly revennues and profyttes that were wont to grow to theyr forefathers and predecessours of theyr landes, nor beynge content that they live in rest and pleasure, nothing profytyng, ye, much noyinge the weale publique, lease no grounde for tillage; they enclose all in pastures; they throw doune houses; they pluck down tounes; and leave nothing stondynge but only the churche, to make of it a shepehowse . . . the husbandmen be thrust oute of their own; orels other by cousyne or fraude, or by violent oppression, they be put besides it, or by wronges and iniuries they be so wearied that they be compelled to sell all . . . and yet then also they be cast into prison as vagabounde, because they go about and worke not; whom no man will set a worke, though they never so willingly offer themselves thereto. For one shepherd is ynough and eate up that grounde with cattel,

to the occupying wherof about husbandrye many hands were requysyte.'[1]

The distress caused by the increase of enclosures became serious about 1485, and in 1489 we begin a series of Acts of Parliament that attempt to stop it. The government was seriously disturbed at the depopulation caused in certain districts. Particularly was this the case in the Isle of Wight, where it was important to have sufficient population to secure the island against raids by the French. These enclosures were rarely illegal. The copyholder was now to some extent protected in the King's Courts against his lord, but the fine on taking up an inheritance was often at the will of the lord, who could raise it till it became prohibitive. It is, however, to be noted that copyhold rents were often below the current value of the land and the landlord's fine might only represent his share of what we should call nowadays the *unearned increment*. By this phrase we mean an increased value in property, usually land, due not to any labour or expenditure of capital by the owner, but to outside causes or general economic changes, such as increased value of products due to greater demand, or the approach of a large city when land for building becomes valuable often to an extent ten or twenty times that of its value for agriculture. In all these changes the open-field farmer suffered least, though he also had least chance of making money.

Effect of the Wars of the Roses. (*a*) Apparently these wars were not very disastrous to the common people. Where actual fighting took place, both parties burnt and wasted with equal brutality, but the bulk of the land escaped and the actual fighters were the nobles and their retainers.

(*b*) But while the ordinary people lived their lives as usual, except for occasional raids due to the abrogation of law, the nobles were busy in mutual destruction. By the accession of Henry VII there was little of the old powerful baronage left, that baronage which having lost the strong control of Norman and Plantagenet kings had threatened the nation with a feudal

[1] More, *Utopia*, First Booke, p. 18

anarchy, such as cursed France and Europe generally. The death of the old lines, the advent of new men raised from the middle class made a strong government, a thinly disguised autocracy, possible, and, for the moment, it was a blessing to the nation. Its blessings and its dangers we shall see in the next century ; for good or ill it made modern England.

CANTERBURY PILGRIMS. Showing costume and a town of the fifteenth century.

(*c*) The rise of the middle class, men who were bred in commercial ideas, ended the long-drawn-out dying of the manorial system. Land became a commercial asset, men were no longer content with a moderate return for their money, the semi-patriarchal condition was broken—money took the place of men. The old lords had valued their land partly for the men-at-arms its possession gave them—the new men asked wealth, and peopled the land with sheep.

(*d*) The disbanding of retainers, coinciding with the change

from arable to pasture, helped to swell the ranks of the unemployed, and this section soon became the unemployable.

Summary. 1. The fourteenth century opened with fair prospects for the rural community. Villeins were commuting their services, lords were farming their demesne or letting it out to prosperous smallholders. Harvests were good and the land, except for the Scotch war, at peace.

2. The Black Death in 1348–9 halved the population and shook the national organization to its foundation. Labour was scarce, wages rose, the peasant prospered, while the landowner of big estates found himself on the verge of ruin. Attempts to coerce the labourer were only partially successful.

3. The Great Revolt of 1381 probably hastened the processes already begun, and villeinage merged gradually into copyhold tenure, and by the end of the fifteenth century was nearing extinction.

4. The first half of the fifteenth century was one of great prosperity to the agricultural labourer, wages were high, prices not greatly advanced. But after 1450 the conversion of arable to pasture created a body of unemployed, which the political disorders of the time tended to turn into a body of brigands, and by the end of the century the lot of the labourer had reached a low level, the nobles were mostly dead, and the day of the city and the trader was at hand.

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2. The Woollen Industry

Early History. It is sometimes asserted that up to the time of Edward III the English clothworking industry was practically non-existent. This is not the case. It is true that the bulk of the wool grown in England was exported and that Flanders was almost entirely dependent on English sheep to supply the raw material for that industry, which made it the central manufacturing country of Europe. But as early as the twelfth century there were weavers' gilds in London, Oxford, Lincoln, Hunting-

don, Nottingham, Winchester, and York, and in 1182 the king bought in Lincoln scarlet cloth at 6*s.* 8*d.* the ell and blanket and 'green say' at 3*s.* In the thirteenth century we find mention of 'Blues of Beverley, scarlets and greens of Lincoln, scarlets and blues of Stamford, coverlets of Winchester and cloth of Totnes'. There are references in the Venice Customs records of 1265 to English 'Stamfords' and also to 'Milanese Stamfords', showing that English cloth was even worth imitating. In 1302 one Boston ship carried for export £250 worth of cloth, belonging to one merchant. In 1312 one-fifth of the townspeople of Bristol were occupied in the cloth industry.

Action of Edward III. But for some reason, not altogether discoverable, the manufacture declined and Edward III revived a policy, started but not carried out by the Parliament of Oxford in 1258, of encouraging and protecting the industry. His measures are not always easy to follow, for foreign policy was apt to interfere, but we may sum them up by saying that, when the needs of war and diplomacy left him free, he aimed at building up a prosperous cloth manufacture at home and at preventing the export of all but our surplus wool to the looms of Flanders. His measures having this aim were as follows:

(*a*) Invitations to Foreign Artisans. If the English worker had forgotten his craft, some one must be got to teach him to regain his skill and improve on it. Flemish craftsmen were without rival, and, fortunately for England, the state of affairs in that country was such as to make it easy to attract its artisans across the sea. The Flemish workers, struggling for self-government, had in 1328 been completely defeated by their Count and his suzerain, Philip of Valois, and hundreds were banished. Also the smaller towns and villages were full of craftsmen struggling against the monopoly claimed by the big cities. If the English king would offer freedom to live and work and sell, he was likely to find plenty to accept the offer. In 1331 a beginning was made by the issue of letters of protection to one John Kempe, a master and craftsman of Flanders, 'his men, servants and apprentices'. A similar grant was made

in 1336 to a man of Brabant, and in 1337 a statute was enacted making the most liberal promises to any foreign cloth-workers who would settle in England. Many came and settled in London, York, Winchester, Norwich, Bristol, and other places.

(*b*) Prohibition of the Export of Wool. But Edward III was not content with improving the English manufacture; in 1332 he started measures to protect the home industry, by forbidding for two years the wearing of imported cloth by all but the wealthy. In 1337 he forbade importation of foreign cloth and the exportation of wool. This protective policy was not consistently maintained, for foreign policy interfered with purely economic measures and the need to cajole or coerce the Flemings during the fluctuations of the French war rendered his measures inconsistent. Thus in 1347 the export of wool was allowed, but the Good Parliament in 1376 reversed this policy and raised the cry of English wool for English craftsmen. Richard II and the Lancastrians allowed the export of wool, but Edward IV, since the Yorkist cause rested largely on the support of the towns, reverted to protection of the English industry.

This policy of State protection was merely a gradual extension of that of the municipalities. They had each severally taken steps to protect themselves from outside competition, and after some hesitation and vacillations the authorities gradually adopted for the nation the same principles. There was at this time probably no general conception of such a theory as later became formulated as the ' mercantile system ', but the tentative measures undoubtedly laid the foundation for such a system. One of these measures was the removal in 1353 of the staple from Bruges to England. English merchants in Bruges suffered from many restrictions, and it was thought that in England they would be free and that the competition of the men of many nations would raise prices for the benefit of the English grower of wool. The plan was resorted to on several occasions, but eventually the staple was fixed at Calais.

(*c*) Duty on Cloth and Wool. Edward's third measure was to arrange the export duties so that it should pay better

to export cloth than wool. Cloth was allowed to be exported after a payment of a duty of less than 2 per cent.; the duty on wool was as much as 33⅓ per cent. So drastic was this latter duty, that in 1424 Parliament had to pass an Act forbidding the sending of sheep over sea in order to shear them there. It must be remembered that, in the fourteenth century, England was practically the only source of wool for western Europe. In the fifteenth century Spain began to supply large quantities, but even then it was necessary to have English wool to mix with it.

These measures of Edward III were entirely successful. During the fifteenth century England changed economically from a country that exported raw material to one that exported manufactures. How great the change was can be judged by the fact that it coincided in time with the agricultural revolution that turned large areas of wheat land into pasture. Indeed, the increased demand for wool for English manufacture helped to bring about the agricultural change. The new industry not only absorbed the old wool supply, which in Edward III's reign exported some 30,000 sacks annually, but was ready to use up as much more as the landowners chose to provide. By 1500 the export of wool had fallen to 5,000 sacks, while the quantity of wool produced in the country was enormously increased. In 1355 between 5,000 and 6,000 cloths were exported, by 1500 the Merchant Adventurers alone exported 60,000, in 1509 they sent out 84,789, and in 1547 the number had risen to over 122,000.

The Aulnage. Since the corner-stone of mediaeval commerce and industry was supervision, it is obvious that, when a manufacture became of more than local importance, the substitution of national control for municipal was inevitable. When the State began to control a large exporting industry, the officials who regulated could no longer be nominees of the mayor of each little town. The cloth manufacture was the first to undergo the change. The State office of the aulnager was in existence as early as the time of Edward I. His business was to ensure a good quality and a standard length and breadth of cloth. In early days the English traders objected to his interference

and his control was confined to imported cloth. When the manufacture of English cloth became extensive, his control was extended to it, and a fee was charged for his services, on every roll of cloth a halfpenny; this was the aulnage. There was much opposition, and much vacillation on the part of the government, but the general trend of policy was towards an enforcement of the Assize of Cloth, which compelled rolls to be of a fixed length. Besides the national control each town had its own

THE ANCIENT WOOL-HOUSE, SOUTHAMPTON

regulations as to the sale of cloth. In many towns it was decreed that all cloth should be sold at one central market, and makers both in the town and from the country districts round were forced under penalties to bring their cloth to this place for sale. Thus Norwich had its 'Worsted Seld', Bristol its Saturday market in Touker Street, and Southampton its 'Cloth Hall', to select a few out of many cases. The merchants of each town watched jealously to prevent outsiders selling any of their wares retail, and the London drapers even tried to prevent wholesale trade with any but themselves. This, however, the central government interfered to prevent. The market for cloth

in London was fixed in 1396 at Blackwell Hall between the hours of 11 a.m. on Thursday and 11 a.m. on Saturday, and in 1405 the drapers were allowed to appoint a keeper of the hall. There were, however, frequent evasions and much friction between clothsellers from other towns and the London drapers, who tried to get control of the whole trade throughout the kingdom.

Process of Manufacture. Subdivision of labour appears very early in the cloth manufacture, and, even though it was through-

SPINNING. SECOND HALF OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

out quite definitely a hand-craft, there were numerous processes involved which were performed by different people. Machinery has to-day greatly increased the number of the processes, but in the Middle Ages the conversion of wool from the sheep's back into finished cloth was not the simple work of one or two hands that it is sometimes taken to have been.

In the following verses describing the processes involved, there are five named, even before it gets to the spinster. She would often be the wife or daughter of a farmer, thus making use of her spare time; for until the invention of the spinning jenny in the eighteenth century, there was always more demand for

yarn for the looms than the workers could supply. Consequently practically every woman was a 'spinster', even great ladies spinning where now they would embroider, in their spare time. From the spinster the yarn passed to the weaver, the central pivot of the manufacture; weaving too was largely done by women, but by no means always in their spare time. It was strenuous work and very skilled, and required a long apprenticeship. The hand loom is fundamentally a frame on which the threads of the warp are stretched and where, by means of a foot lever, the alternate threads can be raised or lowered so that the shuttle holding the woof thread passes between them. The process is then repeated by lowering the threads that were above and raising the others. It is like darning, only instead of the needle moving under and over alternate threads, the needle would remain level and the alternate threads move up and down. But when the cloth is woven there is more to be done; seven more processes are named by the poet before it is ready for the market. It will be easily seen how great must have been the numbers employed in this industry.

First the Parter, that doth neatly cull
The finer from the coarser sort of wool.
The Dyer then in order next doth stand
With sweating brow and a laborious hand.
With oil they then asperge it, which being done
The careful hand of Mixers round it runne.
The Stock carder his arms doth hard employ
(Remembering Friday is our Market Day).
The knee-carder doth (without controule)
Quickly convert it to a lesser roule.
Which done the Spinster doth in hand it take
And of two hundred roules one threed doth make.
The Weaver next doth warp and weave the chain,
Whilst Puss his cat stands mewing for a skane;
But he laborious with his hands and heels,
Forgets his cat and cries, Come boy with queles.
Being fill'd, the Brayer doth it mundifie
From oyle and dirt that in the same doth lie.
The Burler then (yea, thousands in this place)
The thick-set weed with nimble hand doth chase.

The fuller then close by his stock doth stand
And will not once shake Morpheus by the hand.
The Rower next his arm lifts up on high,
And near him sings the Shearman merrily.
The Drawer last, that many faults doth hide
(Whom merchant nor the weaver can abide),
Yet is he one in most cloths stops more holes
Than there be stairs to the top of Paul's.[1]

The carder separated out coarse wool and impurities by means of wire teeth fixed on a piece of leather and attached to a board with a handle. On the quills was wound the thread used for the woof. The burler got rid of lumps and loose ends, while the fuller washed and cleansed and beat and stretched the cloth. Fullers were also called 'Walkers', whence the common surname; they walked or stamped on the cloth when soaking, which both cleansed and thickened it. The rower roughed up all loose threads and hairs with teazles, bringing up the nap ready for the shearman to shear it smooth, after which the drawer drew together all holes and faults, producing an even surface.

The Rise of the Capitalist. Now it will easily be seen that a manufacture involving subdivision among so many people would tend to produce some one who would take charge of the whole industry and *employ* the other workers. The fullers, who were practically the finishers of the cloth, might easily step into such a position. Instead of taking their chance of buying cloth from the weavers, finishing it and selling it as opportunity came, it must early have occurred to the cleverer ones that it would pay better to buy yarn or even raw wool and pay the spinster and the weaver and all the others for their labour, instead of waiting for the farmer to sell his wool to the carder and spinner, the spinner to sell the spun yarn to the weaver and the weaver the undressed cloth to the fuller. There would be economy of time and labour if they supervised the whole thing themselves from the beginning. Or again, the fuller was in the habit of selling his finished cloth wholesale to the draper to sell retail; what more likely to occur to an enterprising draper than the

[1] Richard Watts in *The Young Man's Looking Glass*, published 1641.

idea of himself buying the raw wool and seeing it through all its processes, securing for himself some of the many profits. Whatever class originated it, it is certain that even in the fourteenth century there were men who had started on such a scheme, for we find at Barnstaple two manufacturers paying aulnage on over 1,000 cloths each, which obviously must have been made and finished by others than themselves. The same thing was happening in Salisbury and other parts. Thus the cloth trade gives us the earliest example of the capitalist in English industry. A man who could buy or find money to have made over 1,000 cloths in a year, was obviously no simple craftsman, but an employer of labour with accumulated capital.

But the fifteenth century went further and even anticipated in one or two instances the factory system of four centuries later. One John Winchcombe, known in ballads as Jack of Newbury, is said to have gathered 200 looms in one building and to have employed 600 men, women, and children. A ballad of a century later describes how :—

Within one room being large and long
There stood two hundred looms full strong :
Two hundred men the truth is so
Wrought in these looms all in a row.
By every one a pretty boy
Sate making quills with mickle joy.
And in another place hard by,
An hundred women merrily
Were carding hard with joyful cheer
Who singing sate with voices clear.
And in a chamber close beside,
Two hundred maidens did abide
In petticoats of Stammell red,
And milk-white kerchiefs on their head,
. . . . . .
And spinning so with voices meet
Like Nightingales they sung full sweet.
Then to another roome came they
Where children were in poore array :
And every one sat picking wool,
The finest from the coarse to cull :

The number was seven score and ten,
The children of poore silly men :
And these their labours to requite
Had every one a penny at night,
Beside their meat and drinke all day,
Which was to them a wondrous stay.[1]

The numbers are legendary, the happiness of the hands perhaps mythical, but it is certain that Jack of Newbury was a very successful capitalist clothier. He was not the only one, and the mid sixteenth century saw deserted monasteries turned into cloth factories and the daughter of Thomas Spring of Lavenham in Suffolk, clothier and capitalist, married to Aubrey de Vere, son of the Earl of Oxford. This is a long cry from the simple gildsman with one apprentice and a wife and daughter, and is a portent, both hopeful and ominous, for the next four centuries. It is significant that 1464 saw the first enactment against payment by Truck, i. e. an attempt by the employer to pay part wages in food or goods instead of money, a method that was nothing short of swindling the worker.

Breakdown of the Gild System. 'The essence of the gild system lay in the control of industry by the industrial workers themselves, through an elected authority appointed by them. In the capitalist system, on the other hand, this control is transferred to men who stand outside the ranks of the industrial workers, and are frequently in conflict with them.'[2] We have seen how the increasing complexity of manufacture in the cloth industry gave an opening to the establishment of the capitalist. As he very soon found himself hampered by gild rules and restrictions, his next move was to take the industry outside the towns to the country districts where the workers were not bound by rules made to prevent competition and did their work by such methods and in such times as pleased them. This seemed like liberty, but really exposed them to the exploitation of the capitalist, who used their competition to cut down wages. The gilds tried in vain to keep their monopoly, and gradually, what is

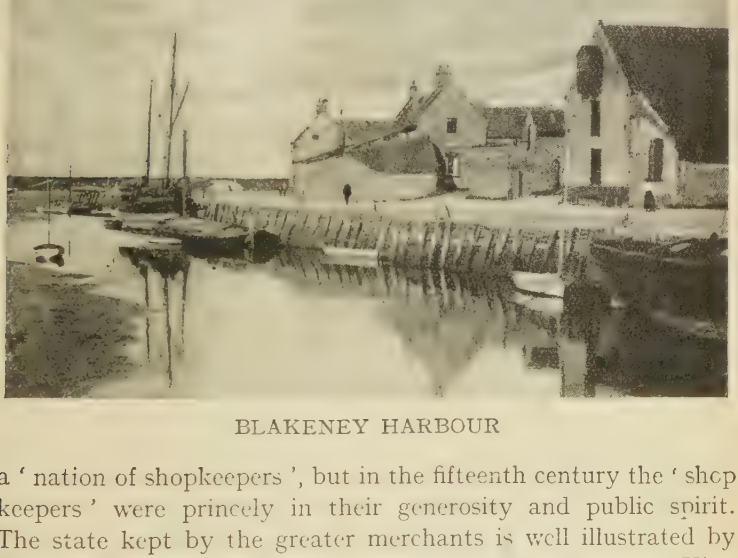
[1] *Works of Thomas Deloney*, edited by F. O. Mann.
[2] E. Lipson, *Introduction to the Economic History of England*, p. 417.

known as the *domestic system*, by which the employer finds capital and gives out work to wage-earners working in their own homes, preferably outside the town, took the place of the old industrial control by the workers themselves. The connexion between this early capitalism and the cloth industry is illustrated by the number and size of the beautiful churches that arose

THE CUSTOM HOUSE, KING'S LYNN

during the fifteenth century in the principal cloth area of England. In Norfolk these are often out of all proportion to the present needs of the villages around them, and they bear mute evidence to the wealth and generosity of the fifteenth-century manufacturer. Other buildings besides churches show the wealth of the rising middle class. Fifteenth-century houses still exist in most large towns, spacious, picturesque, and decorated with fine carved work. Market crosses often of great beauty arose, while

the great livery companies of London started to build themselves spacious halls almost regardless of expense. Useful public works were not neglected by the wealthy trader, streets were paved, new water-supplies provided, gates, quays, bridges, wharves, harbours, sluices and aqueducts were supplied either by public subscription or private benefaction. Richard Whittington devoted his wealth to supplying London with water, and he was not alone in such public action. England was becoming



BLAKENEY HARBOUR

a 'nation of shopkeepers', but in the fifteenth century the 'shop keepers' were princely in their generosity and public spirit. The state kept by the greater merchants is well illustrated by William Canynge of Bristol, who in 1461 entertained King Edward IV in fashion that rivalled that of a great noble. Even in the Poll-Tax returns of 1379 we find the Mayor of London assessed at £4 at the same rate as an earl, the mayors of other large towns, like barons, at £2, and great merchants at £1.

Needless to say the gilds did not suffer their organization to be thus undermined without a struggle. Their policy was, however, very short-sighted. The maintenance of their own

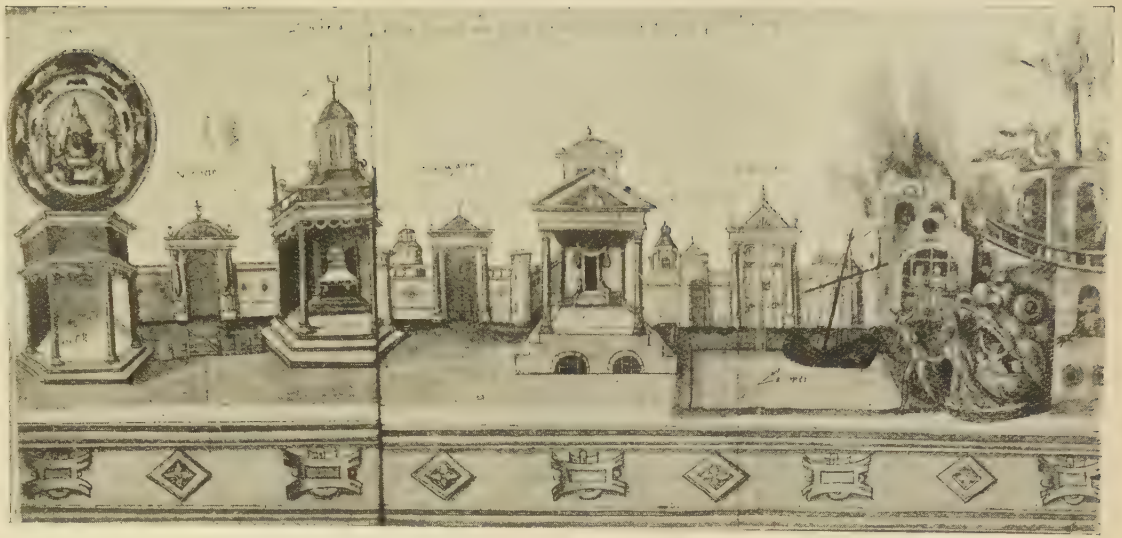
personal monopoly became the chief object of the wealthier members, and for this end they proceeded (*a*) to limit the number of apprentices, (*b*) to raise the fees both for membership of the gild and for the freedom of the city, (*c*) to add to the expenses attaching to membership. The chief of these were the great costliness of the compulsory feasts and the increasing elaboration of the pageants and mystery plays. The burden of thus entertaining the people had early been thrown on the gilds, and much time, money, and ingenuity were spent on it. At Norwich no less than twelve pageants were produced each year by 12 groups of craft-gilds; at York the various incidents were allotted to appropriate trades, for the Armourers showed Adam and Eve driven from Paradise, while the Shipwrights built Noah's ark and the Fishers and Mariners provided the Flood. The productions were on no mean scale and became a serious tax on the poorer members. Throughout the fifteenth century there were bitter complaints of the unwillingness of the gildsmen to pay their share, and many petitions to be released from the obligation.

Had the gilds been successful in maintaining their legal monopoly of the craft these measures might have succeeded for a time, but since the expanding power of trade prevented this they only achieved their own ruin. This fell all the more swiftly because of the growing laziness and indifference of the general mass of craftsmen, who shirked office and even attendance at meetings, leaving to the astute and wealthy the power and the burden of office.

Within the gilds the chief results were as follows:

(*a*) The increasing cost of setting up as a master prevented the apprentices starting for themselves, and so we find a large body of journeymen growing up either outside the gild or powerless members within it, whose wages and conditions of work were dictated to them by their masters and employers.

(*b*) The appearance of a sharp class distinction between 'brethren of the clothing', or livery, and ordinary members. It had been common in early days for gilds, both craft-gilds and religious ones, to wear a distinctive dress on festal occasions,



THE ELABORATE STAGING OF A MIRACLE PLAY

and as wealth increased this livery became more and more costly. At last it came to be confined to the richer members, and from among these the wardens and other officers were selected.

The journeymen did not give in without a struggle. They formed gilds of their own and combined to resist attempts either to lower their wages or increase their hours of labour. They entered, too, on a campaign to secure better conditions, for the Black Death had given them the same chance it gave to the agricultural labourer and they were not slow to use it. Their method was the strike and even the 'sympathetic strike', whereby all stopped work if one master tried to injure one workman. The masters replied by 'blacklisting' and agreed not to employ the revolting servant of a fellow-gildsman. The Journeyman Gild of the fifteenth century was thus much more like the modern Trade Union than was the Craft Gild, but its fate was less happy. It suffered from two things, (1) the fact that it was constantly losing its cleverer members, who managed to pass into the ranks of master-craftsmen and employers, for the capital required was not yet so large as to take from an enterprising journeyman all hope of such advancement, (2) that the general trend of public opinion was against them. Mediaeval opinion still objected to combinations that raised the cost of an article against the consumer, and though the masters had no objection to so combining themselves they were careful always to pose as guardians of the public welfare, when standing out against their employés' demands. 'The right to strike was denied by law and vehemently resisted by public opinion as contrary to the common good.'[1] The fight was bitter and both sides on occasion resorted to physical force, as when in 1387 the journeymen shoemakers 'because that Richard Bonet of the trade aforesaid would not agree with them made assault upon him so that he hardly escaped with his life', and in 1358 the master-weavers attacked their journeymen 'with pole-axes, baslards, and iron pointed poles'. But on the whole throughout the

[1] A. S. Green, *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, ii. 127.

fifteenth century the masters held their own ; though wages did go up, the journeymen remained largely at the mercy of their employers.

Meanwhile the poorer masters, those not of the livery, were becoming of less and less importance in the gilds and were sinking to the level of the journeymen. The liveries, finding it difficult to repress entirely the recalcitrant journeymen, who persisted in forming their own gilds even under colour of purely religious objects, conceived the idea of joining the smaller masters with these wage-workers in one body as subordinate members of their own gilds under the title of ' yeomanry '. Being strictly subordinate to the oligarchs their association ceased to be in any sense a trade union.

The control of the gilds having thus passed to a few rich members, these proceeded to abuse their powers. They made regulations in their own interests, such as limiting the rate at which members should work and so keeping the supply short and the price high. They manipulated the civic offices so that there was no one to control them except their fellow members, who naturally omitted to do so.

Lastly, it was during the fifteenth century that the trader became separated from the craftsman. In early days the craftsman made and sold the article he worked in. But in the fifteenth century the class of traders who made nothing but bought from the maker to sell to the public, became general. We have seen it in the cloth trade even in the century before, by 1500 it had extended to most industries. It was this trading class that produced the great inequality of wealth. These traders were not in the craft-gilds, but they formed ' Companies ', which, controlling the market, came to control the craft-gild and helped to reduce it to unimportance.

The Towns. The changes that took place in the gilds are only concentrated examples of what was going on throughout the land in all the towns. The increase of wealth and the rise of the capitalist gave an impetus towards prosperity that sent many a municipality far, in increased numbers, in rising com-

merce and industry, and in material improvement. On the other hand, there were also forces at work which threatened ruin to other towns less fortunate or less enterprising. The story of towns like Colchester and Bridport shows the rising tide of prosperity. In Colchester in 1300 the wealthiest tradesman, in a population of some 2,000, was a butcher, the valuation of his entire stock and property being £7 15*s.* 2*d.* Even multiplied by 20 to get an approximate sum in modern money, this can hardly be called wealth. But during the fourteenth century makers of cloth arrived, and in 1373 there was wealth enough in the town to provide a Wool Hall and add a fine porch to the entrance to the Moot Hall. By 1400 the population had doubled. The progress of Bridport is even more remarkable. In 1319 Bridport had 180 burgesses, but at a 'view of arms' there was not a bow and arrows among them; knives, daggers, hatchets, or pole-axes were their only weapons. The richest burgess in the town owned one cow, two hogs, two brass platters, a few hides, and a little furniture—value in all £4 8*s.*—while the best innkeeper in the place owned two hogs, two beds, two table-cloths, two hand-napkins, a horse, a brass pot, a platter, some wooden vessels, and some malt. But by 1458 there was a great change; settlers from Bristol and from Holland had brought prosperity; toll hall, gild hall, and church had been repaired, ornamented, or rebuilt, and the muster roll showed, in place of almost unarmed peasants, a brave array of men with bows and arrows as well as daggers and spears, many of them 'marching proudly with their mails, jacks, salets, and white harness with a basnet'.[1]

The re-building and enlarging of churches that marked the fifteenth century has already been referred to, together with much valuable and public-spirited work within the towns themselves. Indeed, there was plenty of opportunity for such public munificence. The condition of a mediaeval town at the end of the fourteenth century beggars description. Often the streets were choked with refuse, not merely that from the

[1] A. S. Green, *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, i. 15.

ordinary household, considerable in itself in an age when drainage was unknown and the public street was the only dust-bin, but from all the manifold trades as well. Timber dealers and builders blocked them with trees and logs, dyers poured out their waste water, butcher and swine-keeper threw into them the refuse of the slaughter-house, while any enterprising citizen who listed turned a stream across the way or built a dam for his private convenience, reducing the road to a swamp. In Aylesbury, one Richard Boose dug a large hole in the public highway to get clay to mend his mill. The hole became a lake, in which a man and horse were drowned. The miller, charged with the death, was acquitted on the ground that he had no malicious intent and really could not get this particular clay elsewhere!

But though often thus tolerant of squalor and selfishness, protests did arise and much work of civic reform was undertaken. Though convinced that 'Dirt has nothing to do with disease', in spite of constant epidemics which made the ordinary death-rate as high as that of a modern cholera outbreak, still the growing desire of men with wealth to spend for a pleasanter existence led to much improvement. Streets were repaired, either at the public expense or by some prosperous citizen, hovels replaced by fine shops with chambers over them, markets and wool-halls built, enlarged, or beautified. Water-supply, wharves, quays, all received attention in proportion as the prosperity of the town grew. It is to the credit of York that in 1371, seventeen years before Parliament took the matter in hand, its authorities passed regulations forbidding refuse heaps outside doors and dunghills in the city, while the owners of wandering pigs were fined, or the animals, if found in the High Street, killed.

The whole of England, however, was not equally prosperous. The shifting industry, while it brought prosperity to one place, often ruined another. War, while it left many towns unaffected, did not entirely spare all. The coast towns suffered badly from French raids; Rye, Southampton, and other southern ports

were burnt more than once; taxation for a useless war, which the nation would not give up and could not win, drained the resources of places already holding their own with difficulty, while every now and again some town fell a victim to the ruthless savagery of the faction war. Though the richer towns bought immunity from White or Red Rose as occasion demanded, the poorer ones were not always as successful; Peterborough, Cambridge, and Boston were burnt. As a result we find that from 1433 onwards constant remission of taxation has to be granted to impoverished towns. Lincoln in particular is exempted again and again. War, fire, and pestilence were, however, not the only causes of municipal decay. We have seen how the policy of the gilds helped to drive industry from the town to the country. Their exclusiveness, combined with the preference of the increasing number of capitalists for unorganized labour, resulted in a migration from town to suburbs that in the end often ruined the town.

The increase of the villages in what we may call industrial areas, such as Norfolk and Somerset, is shown by the rise of a large number of religious gilds, often as many as 5 or 6 in one village, and in Norfolk over 900 all told. Their purpose we have already seen; their presence indicates a transformation in village life and the growth of a middle class there.

Labour Questions. The combined effect of the agricultural and industrial changes of the fifteenth century was the concentration of wealth in fewer hands, the increase in numbers of the pure wage-earner, and the consequent beginnings of that labour problem which has vexed England for over four centuries with ever-increasing intensity. The scarcity of labour caused by the Black Death, while it for a time improved the position of the labourer, practically forced the landowner into an economy of production which was best secured by the formation of large estates occupied in that branch of farming which required fewest workers, viz. wool growing. At the same moment an enterprising monarch embarked on a policy which changed England from a country producing only raw material to one of

manufacture, which, from the multiplicity of its processes, tended also to produce the capitalist and the controller of large business. Consequently, when land and craft alike became controlled by a comparatively few rich men, the systems of the manor and the gild, devised for a totally different arrangement of society, equally broke down and in the resulting chaos the weak went to the wall, old supports fell, and rich and poor faced each other as increasingly open enemies. 'As the weaker members of the crowd from time to time sank back into utter penury, the outcasts of the industrial system slowly gathered into a new brotherhood of the destitute; and even in the fifteenth century . . . the advanced guard of the army of paupers appears in the streets of the boroughs to trouble the counsels of municipal rulers.'[1]

General Industries. 1. Coal. There was no great increase in the coal trade until the sixteenth century. The labour of the coal miner was very badly paid and workers were difficult to get. Wood and charcoal continued to be the principal fuels.

2. Iron. There was considerable increase in the manufacture of iron, chiefly for weapons of war. The Sussex ironfield was developed and became the centre for the manufacture of cannon. These had been introduced into England about 1330, and were used at Cambrai 1339 and at Creçy 1346. The earliest were made of bronze, but later iron was used. The cannon was not in one piece but made like a barrel with staves and hoops: it was loaded from the breech and the ammunition consisted of stone balls, for iron ones were not used till the end of the fifteenth century. Such a weapon must have been very uncertain in action and 'the life of a gun in the fifteenth century seems to have been short, that of the gunner precarious'.[2] In 1543 a method of casting cannon in one piece and boring them was devised and a new era of gunnery set in. The working of the bellows by water-power was first used for iron-smelting in the fifteenth century and the price of iron was double that in 1348.

[1] A. S. Green, *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, vol. ii. 109.

[2] L. F. Salzmann, *English Industries of the Middle Ages*, p. 110.

3. Lead and Tin. The lead industry remained much the same throughout the period, while the tin trade suffered badly from the effects of the Black Death and did not recover till the sixteenth century.

4. Quarrying. Slates were first used in the fourteenth century, and alabaster became fashionable about the same time. In 1367 £200 was paid for an alabaster reredos for St. George's, Windsor. The centre for it was Nottingham and the stone was exported. Purbeck continued an important centre for stone-

BREWING

work, and in the sixteenth century the marblers and stone-cutters of that place formed a company, to which women were admissible.

5. Metal Work. There was a great increase of plate during the fifteenth century, much of the wealth of the rich being put into this form. Bellfounders were numerous, and their name persists in Billiter Street.

6. Pottery, &c. Wall tiles were introduced in 1335, bricks late in the fourteenth century, floor tiles, common in the fourteenth, died out in the fifteenth and have only recently been revived. In the fifteenth century English glass was despised and we find Flemish glass being imported for Eton College.

7. Brewing. Ale was still the general drink, but beer was imported in small quantities from Flanders at the end of the fourteenth century. Its use did not become general for another 100 years. Ale brewing was still largely in the hands of women, and in 1419 there were 39 women livery members of the Brewers Company in London. Wine-making almost entirely ceased.

8. Silk. By the middle of the fourteenth century the silk-weavers of London were an organized body, composed appar-

WINDING OFF SILK FROM THE COCOONS

ently mainly of women. During the fifteenth century they appealed to the king for protection against alien competition, and in 1455 the importation of manufactured silk was forbidden. The petition is interesting; it states that 'before this time, many a worshipful woman within the said city have lived full honourably, and therewith many good households kept, and many gentlewomen and other in great number like as there now be more than a thousand have been drawn under them in learning the same craft and occupation',[1] yet now from competition of

[1] Rot. Parl. V, 325 a.

silk from Italy there was 'great idleness amongst young gentlewomen . . . and laying down of many good and notable households'.

Summary. 1. There had been an English woollen industry as early as the twelfth century, but it is to Edward III that we owe the impetus that eventually placed England at the head of the wool-manufacturing states. By inviting Flemish artisans to settle in England and by a policy, more or less consistent, of encouraging the export of cloth and limiting that of wool, he and his successors eventually drew from Flanders the monopoly of the manufacture and in the end superseded that country. This policy combined with and reacted on the contemporaneous movement for the conversion of arable land to pasture, and the two processes together converted England from a purely agricultural land to one having considerable manufactures.

2. The improvement of the processes of manufacture and its subdivision among many workers produced the capitalist and tended to break up the gild system which had hitherto controlled all industry. The same forces destroyed the originally democratic government of the gilds as of the towns, and concentrated the power of both bodies in the hands of a continually decreasing number of wealthy traders and manufacturers to the exclusion of the constantly increasing number of daily wage-earners and the destruction of the small master-craftsman.

3. The total prosperity of the nation undoubtedly increased greatly between 1300 and 1500, but at the same time inequalities of wealth became more marked, the mere wage-earner increased in number, the breakdown of the old system of protection was not followed by any successful new one to protect the weak against the strong, 'labour questions' began to appear, with, worse still, the early recruits of a pauper class, which rapidly became too numerous for existing charitable or municipal agencies to deal with.

3. War, Trade and Economics

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries form a period of war broken by scanty intervals of peace. The Hundred Years War with France brought nothing to either side and drained the resources of both combatants, while France bought victory at an even greater price than England paid for defeat. The earlier period of the contest is marked by the increase of luxury in England; war as usual gave an impetus to certain trades, employed any surplus workmen, and gave a career to those adventurous spirits who found little scope for their activities at home. The shipbuilders, the armourers, the victualling trades, the clothiers, in the fourteenth century even as in the twentieth, for a time did fine business. As the successful armies of Edward swept over northern France, and at first by twos and threes, and later by tens and hundreds, discharged soldiers found their way home, in days when 'loot' was often the only way of paying the warrior, the wealth and luxury of their rich enemy was transferred across the Channel. England itself, guarded by its narrow seas, escaped almost entirely the devastations of war. A few of her coast towns, like Rye, were burnt and her ships destroyed by raids from French harbours, but the country itself went on as usual, while the annexation of Calais gave England entire command of all the sea routes from northern to southern Europe. France, on the other hand, suffered for the best part of the hundred years all the horrors of a war on her own soil, aggravated by bands of mercenaries and companies, who, while they sold their services to the highest bidder, harried equally under both flags the unfortunate land over which they fought. So serious was the disorder and devastation that the great fairs of Burgundy ceased and the French overland trade route was closed. Mediterranean trade found its way increasingly by sea, that sea of which Edward III claimed 'the sovereignty', though he did little to make the claim a reality.

We have seen that Edward III's commercial policy was not

consistent. In the main he seems to have desired to protect the home worker and to secure his supply of food, but there was another factor in the case. The pivot on which the French war turned was the co-operation of Flanders, and we find the English Government manipulating its wool and cloth duties accordingly. If Flanders needed coercing, then wool export was hindered or stopped; if persuasion seemed momentarily a better method, then the bales by which Flemish industry lived were released even at the cost of hampering native looms. Besides this the duty on wool was a considerable part of the royal income, and war is an expensive business. Edward could not always afford to forgo this tax, even to encourage home manufactures.

The business of finding the money for Edward's wars had a notable influence on English merchants. When the war broke out in 1337, Edward tried the experiment of working his business through the leading English traders. For the money he depended largely on a system of buying English wool under his royal right of purveyance and selling it in Flanders, but as this took time he gave it into the hands of the men who knew most about it. They failed him badly, either from incompetence or from a short-sighted attempt to raise prices, so the king turned to the great Lombard bankers. From them he borrowed largely and allowed them first of all to handle the wool export and then, when that was not sufficient, to farm the customs. The early years of the war were terribly expensive; Edward relied on foreign alliances secured by gifts of English money, and on mercenaries for his troops. The drain on the country was such that in order to pay his debts and obligations most of the sources of royal revenue were farmed by the king either to Lombard or Hanse merchants. Englishmen became more and more exasperated as they saw such power in the hands of detested aliens, and by 1340, when a truce was arranged, they began to feel strong enough to oppose the king's methods. In 1346, largely owing to the action of English merchants, the Lombard houses of the Bardi and the Peruzzi failed, and henceforth English merchants took their place in finding the king money. It is interesting to note that,

even in the Middle Ages, war was capable of affecting the financial stability of far-off neutral states. When Edward's inability to pay his debts to the Bardi caused the fall of the great Florentine house, it so shook the prosperity of Florence that that city never recovered its former financial position. Edward, too, had found foreign alliances costly and useless, while mercenaries were difficult to retain if ready cash were not at hand. Consequently he changed his plans and put the whole nation under arms by calling up every man holding land of the value of £5 and upwards, allowing, however, substitutes to be purchased. English merchants took the place of aliens and lent the necessary money, being repaid by assignments on the customs and other taxes. Thus the campaigns of Crécy and Calais were fought and managed by Englishmen alone, and in 1348 the credit of the leading merchants stood high and sure.

But the Black Death changed the situation; the life of the whole nation was shaken to its foundation, and the merchants proved too weak to stand the shock. For some time a growing feeling against the English leaders of finance had manifested itself. Farming the taxes they had proved just as extortionate and selfish as any aliens, and the whole business had collected into the hands of a few rich contractors; when the Black Death, with its consequent dearth of labour and hence of wool and every other source of taxation, made it impossible for them to meet their obligations, they fell as the Lombards fell.

At this juncture the king adopted a more sensible plan, which might have saved him much if he had used it fifteen years earlier. Instead of farming the customs either to aliens or to native merchants he administered them by means of paid officials, as is the modern practice. At the same time he removed the Staple to England, and so freed the sale of English wool from the restrictions and annoyances imposed on it by the jealousy of the Flemish towns. This threw the risk by sea on the foreign merchant who came for the wool, and made it impossible for the Flemish towns to injure the sale or force a monopoly of it for the leading towns of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres.

The first part of the Hundred Years War, which ended at the Treaty of Bretigny in 1360, had thus two notable economic effects :

(*a*) It had taught the English a great deal about finance, both what to do and what not to do.

(*b*) It had helped to create the large capitalist, by giving scope to the activities of any who could get together a sufficient sum to stake on royal and national ventures.

During the earlier fifteenth century, the alliance between England and Burgundy caused consideration of the needs of Flanders, while in the latter part the support given by that country to the Yorkist cause brought about a cessation of commercial intercourse when the Lancastrians triumphed in 1485. Not till eleven years later did the far-seeing policy of Henry VII succeed in re-establishing it.

Connected with both war and trade was the system of piracy that prevailed. It will be remembered that one method of mutual protection resorted to by mediaeval towns was the seizure of a foreign merchant's goods to discharge the debt of another from the same town. This practice was gradually extended to the high seas and naturally led to fights and reprisals. Thus when Bordeaux merchants had their wines taken from them by Flemish pirates, they secured licence to seize the property of Flemish merchants in England. Such actions produced in the end a sort of private warfare, more or less licensed by the governments, between the merchants of Norway, Prussia, Flanders, England, Scotland, Spain, and Genoa. But besides this semi-recognized piracy, there were real pirates and plenty of them. As many as nine haunts of these rovers were cleared in 1408 from the mouth of the Ems. The English claim to the 'sovereignty of the seas' was not justified in the only way that could justify it, by policing them, and the nuisance remained unabated throughout the period. There was no navy ; when the king wanted ships more than the Cinque Ports supplied to transport his soldiers he simply commandeered them and threw the cost on the town that supplied them. Towards the end of the

fourteenth century the burden became so great that, though Englishmen built ships, they sold them to aliens rather than take the risk of sailing them under the English flag.

The Wars of the Roses followed hard on the French wars, but their economic effect at the time was far less. This struggle was essentially feudal; it seems to have affected the towns but slightly and the traders as a class not at all. The town authorities seem to have adopted the policy of bowing to the power of the moment and buying forgiveness when fortune brought the other side to the top. On the whole they were Yorkist in sympathy, and Edward IV rewarded their support by shaping his policy to suit their views.

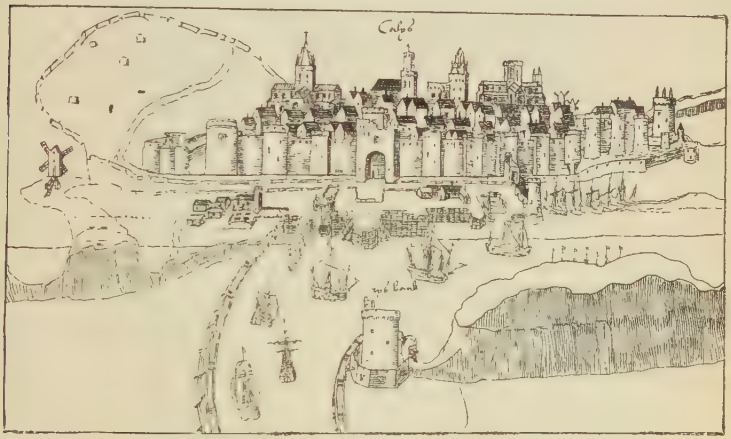
The Beginnings of a Mercantilist Policy. Edward III had been concerned mainly with the protection of the English worker and the securing of his food supplies. But from the time of the Good Parliament and Richard II, we find a more definite cry of England for the English. Restrictions on aliens were enforced, an attempt was made to encourage English shipbuilding by enacting in 1381 a NAVIGATION ACT forbidding English merchants to import or export goods except in English ships, and regulations were imposed to prevent the export of gold and silver. The alien question was not settled, as we shall see, for another two centuries. The Navigation Act failed for want of English ships, and the attempt to control the flow of money was not much more successful. It is not very likely that the government of Richard II had any very definite ideas of connexion between these three aspects of commerce, though the Navigation Act had something to do with the need for a navy. Each expedient was made to meet the needs of some one section of the nation, and was merely a transfer of the selfishness of mediaeval municipal policy to the nation as a whole. What current opinion of the fifteenth century judged the best basis for our national policy is seen in *The Libelle of English Policie* published in 1436. The fundamental business of England was to guard her commerce, while Providence drove into her lap the products of all lands. Firmly seated on both sides of the narrow stormy Channel,

Dover and Calais gave her the keys of the world's trade; she could take at will what she pleased, provided she held the seas. Thirty years later another 'little book' put forward the same view, this time for our industrial success. Seeing that to England all men must come either for wool or for cloth, we were 'by God's ordinance' destined first to supply our own needs and then by use of our monopoly 'to rule and govern all Christian

WARSHIP, about 1485.

kings'. Equally obvious was our duty to sell our goods as dear as we could, to keep the best wool for our own looms and so secure for our workers wealth and prosperity. In all this there is little suggestion of the mercantilist idea of using commerce to increase national power, rather the reverse. The writers have in their minds merely expedients for securing, as they thought at the expense of other nations, the wealth and happiness of Englishmen. For this end they were ready to interfere with and control both industry and commerce by endless regulation. Regulation had been municipal, it now was

becoming national, and its object would change as the national ambition changed. At present that ambition was, at its best, for a prosperous people within the sea-girt isle, at its worst, for the increase of wealth and power to the class that for the moment held the reins of government. But when the national ambition changed, as the world awoke to fresh horizons in the dawning sixteenth century, the policy required but little adapting for the new aim of a world-wide empire and a 'place in the sun'.



CALAIS TOWN AND HARBOUR

The Alien Merchant. During the thirteenth century most of the foreign trade of England was in the hands of aliens, whom the English merchant welcomed so long as they made no attempt to deal retail and were kept in a position entirely subordinate to the Englishman. We have seen how the alien tried to protect himself by making special bargains with the king,[1] and how in the case of great organizations like the Hanseatic League he succeeded. But with a parliament in which burgesses formed an influential part the monarch was forced often to consider their interests as well as his own revenue. England embarked on a policy, not merely of ousting the alien from her own markets,

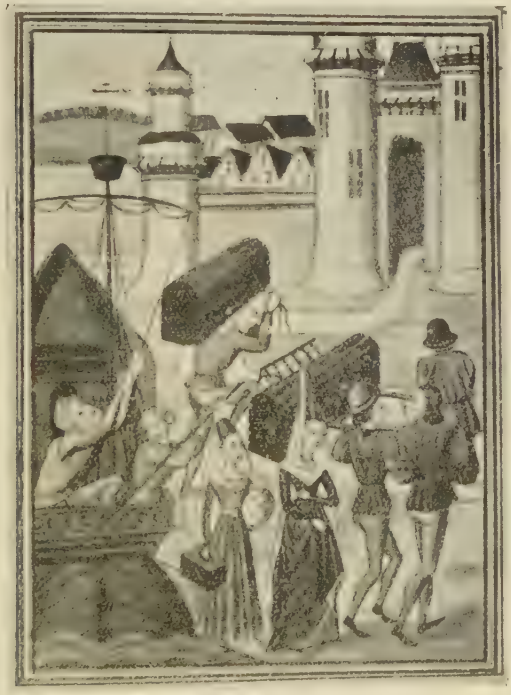
[1] See p. 84.

but even of encroaching on the alien's own. In the fifteenth century Flanders saw ruin at hand. Bruges in the thirteenth century had 40,000 looms, by 1500 it was almost deserted; Ypres, with a population in 1408 of over 80,000, of whom some 4,000 were clothworkers, in 1486 could muster but 6,000 inhabitants and less than 30 cloth factories. Attempts to shut out English cloth from Flemish markets were met by similar decrees in England, and England held the wool. In the fourteenth century Genoese merchants held the carrying trade of England, in the fifteenth English merchants were fighting Italians in the Levant for that of the Mediterranean. The struggle was bitter and unscrupulous. The story runs that near the end of the fourteenth century a Genoese merchant who offered, on conditions, to make Southampton the great western port for oriental produce on its road to Flanders and France, was murdered at his own door by order of great London traders. The first English ship to appear in the Levant was captured by Genoese rivals, and henceforth fierce fights heralded the opening of any new area to English commerce.

The Merchant Adventurers. Such an extension of enterprise called into existence a number of free-lance merchants, at first unorganized, who pushed their trade into every corner of the continental coast by any sort of means they could. At first they had swooped down on any area where the power of the earlier comers was weakening. Antwerp, forsaken by the Staplers, became a centre of their operations; in Bergen, left by the Hanseatic League, they set up their own market and for years held their own against fire and sword; Dantzic, where the league was losing ground, saw 300 ships of these English adventurers laden with cloth for all the markets of Prussia.

But by the end of the fourteenth century they too began to turn respectable and to desire to oust new-comers, and in 1406 Henry IV granted them a charter protecting them from 'other meddling merchants'. Gradually the tendency to join into Gilds or Companies drove them together, and various companies of Merchant Adventurers were formed in different areas, one in the Netherlands, others in Germany and Scandinavia.

It was, however, not to be expected that existing traders, filled with the monopolist ideas of the age, would sit quietly by and watch their markets invaded by these new-comers. Their first enemy was the old organization of MERCHANT STAPLERS.



LADY DE COUCY LANDING AT BOULOGNE.
Showing costume of the fifteenth century.

The Staplers exported wool, the Merchant Adventurers manufactures. The latter wanted the wool kept in the country, the former found that the profits of manufacture were ruining the wool export of England. The Staplers claimed the right to export cloth also. Safely established in Antwerp, the Adventurers demanded that if the Staplers wished to sell cloth in their

markets, they must join the Adventurers Company and be subject to its laws and courts. The Staplers resisted and complained bitterly to English king and Burgundian duke, but the Adventurers went on their way undeterred by decree of king or council, and contemptuously told the Staplers to keep to Calais. Each year the trade in wool declined, that in manufactures increased—the Staple was doomed.

But the struggle with the HANSEATIC LEAGUE was more formidable. For 200 years the battle raged from Dantzic to Iceland. The Adventurers ran an illicit trade with Iceland, where the King of Norway, at the dictation of the League, forbade any ships but his own. Defying royal decrees, English as well as Norwegian, Bristol merchants, using the compass for the first recorded time in 1424, carried thither goods and returned with fish. Once the English seized 108 ships returning to Lübeck and Riga and the Hanse retaliated in kind. In 1469 open war broke out, members of the Steelyard were imprisoned and the corporation nearly destroyed; Bremen, Hamburg and Dantzic raised a fleet against England and, but for the sudden expulsion of Edward IV, would have attacked. Seeing their opportunity, Germans, Flemish and Dutch united to restore him, and his gratitude for this timely help placed, in 1474, the German Hanse at the pinnacle of its power in England. It was, however, only a final and not a permanent spurt. Laws passed in the interest of English merchants, such as that forbidding the import of silk or the export of undressed cloth, injured their trade; a policy of petty harassing by officials and perpetual public abuse broke up their business so that a member of the League dare hardly venture outside his fortified Steelyard. Other nations too were rising against their monopoly and, in 1478, the capture of Novgorod by the Muscovites and the destruction of its republican government disorganized the entire Eastern trade. Finally, Henry VII by long patient diplomacy united against them most of northern Europe and forced them to accept humiliating conditions.

But Englishmen were not contented with the trade of the

north only. The ruin of the Russian route, the decay of that of the Rhine or the Rhone, made the Mediterranean trade more valuable than ever. From 1440 the battle raged with the Genoese and the Venetians. Parliament, voicing the desires of England's merchants, tried to prevent the Italians trading in any wares but their own, and in spite of royal support they saw their privileges lessen one by one. Venice tried to keep her monopoly of wine, England retorted by setting up a monopoly of wool. Florence meanwhile, by a policy of free trade, began to hold her own again and welcomed English wool to her free port of Pisa. Henry VII concluded with her a treaty by which he guaranteed the delivery of enough wool for all Italy except Venice and received in return absolute freedom for English merchants in Florentine territory. Venetians tried in vain to retaliate, and in 1507 Henry allowed them to renew their charter in England only by giving up all the carrying trade between England and the Netherlands.

HENRY VII

Commercial Policy of Henry VII. Henry VII was the first of our modern monarchs; in his hands the sovereign ceased to be a feudal overlord and became a national king. Wars for extension of territory he realized were profitless engagements, adding nothing to the wealth and happiness of the country nor even of the king. He turned his mind therefore to expansion of commerce, on which basis he hoped to build peace and prosperity. He was, however, handicapped somewhat in such a policy by the insecurity of his title to the throne. This particularly affected his relations with Flanders. His main purpose undoubtedly was to secure peace and goodwill between the two

A Part of the STANDARD *of Weights and Measures in the Exchequer.*
Annº 12 Henrici Septimi.

From the Original Table, formerly in the Treasury of the King's Exchequer

countries, neither of which could do without the other. Flanders and Brabant, the market-place of Europe, were necessary to the English merchants for the sale of their wares ; without England's wool the Flemish looms lay idle and the people starved. But Margaret, Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV, was a persistent Yorkist and the centre of every plot to drive Henry from his throne. Commercial retaliation was resorted to in hope of inducing Maximilian to restrain the activities of his mother-in-law, and the English merchants suffered almost

THE TOWN BUSHEL, SOUTHAMPTON. Granted by Henry VII.

as much as the Flemish. The former were withdrawn from Antwerp, the latter expelled from England. For two years trade between the two countries ceased, but in 1496 a treaty of peace was signed which was known in later times as the INTERCURSUS MAGNUS. By this Philip of Flanders, Maximilian's son, who had now entered on his Burgundian inheritance, agreed to a restoration of all rights to English merchants such as they had possessed for fifty years, and Henry allowed them to return to Antwerp. Mutual and equal rights were conceded in each country to the merchants of the other, and neither prince was to shelter the other's rebellious subjects. If Margaret persisted in her support of the Yorkist cause, her grandson undertook to

deprive her of her dower lands. In 1499 Henry secured for English cloth freedom from all duties within the Burgundian dominions, except Flanders, and in 1506 he took advantage of Philip's being driven by a gale into an English port, while on his way to take up his wife's Spanish inheritance, to exact still more favourable terms, whereby Flanders also was opened to English cloth and the retail as well as the wholesale trade elsewhere. This was called by the Flemings the MALUS INTERCURSUS; but Philip's death next year put the power in the hands of his sister Margaret as regent for his son, and she repudiated the inequitable treaty, and the clause as to retail trading was withdrawn.

In pursuance of the same policy Henry worked for commercial treaties with places like Bordeaux, Denmark and Norway, Riga (to break the Baltic monopoly of the Hanseatic League), Florence, the Empire, France, Spain and Portugal. The last named became increasingly important as the Cape route to India more and more deflected from Italy the oriental trade, and Lisbon, instead of Venice, became the general port of trans-shipment. The treaties with Florence, by which he broke the Venetian carrying trade, have already been mentioned.

With the Hanse Henry was usually struggling, and he stuck manfully to the point that facilities for trade given to Germans in England should be balanced by similar facilities for English merchants in Baltic ports. He was not altogether successful in this, for from 1504 onwards he was impeded by the necessity of keeping the German free cities from harbouring Suffolk and his plots for the Crown.

But, while he worked steadily to support the enterprise of English merchants and to win markets for them, he also saw the necessity for a maritime state to do its own carrying trade. With this end in view he did everything in his power to encourage shipping, giving bounties for the construction of large ships, building the first dry dock at Portsmouth, and preventing foreign vessels from carrying English wool to the Netherlands. Two NAVIGATION ACTS were passed in 1485 and 1488, by which

wine from Guienne or Gascony and woad from Toulouse could only be imported in English ships, and merchants in England were not to load goods on foreign vessels if English were available.

The policy of preventing a flow of money and precious metals out of the country was pursued and made more stringent. The Act of 1478 was renewed in 1487, and later no foreigner might take more than 10 crowns in cash from the country, while in 1503 it was forbidden to export more than 6*s.* 8*d.* worth of bullion, plate, or coin to Ireland.

Looking back a century later Bacon discerned in all these expedients of the first Tudor a new policy which his successors developed into a marvellous instrument for the aggrandizement of the nation. It ' bowed the ancient policy of this realm from considerations of plenty to considerations of power '. But, as we have seen, no item of the policy was new, only the consistent application of them. It is doubtful if Henry aimed at more than securing a prosperous nation as a bulwark to his throne and the dynasty he hoped to found. Before the end of his reign it was becoming more obvious that power followed commerce, but there does not seem much to suggest that Henry encouraged commerce as a means to power. That wealth was power he greatly understood, that to a monarch the want of money was the root of all evil he firmly believed, but there his vision stayed. Forces were at work which were to drive all Europe for nearly 400 years into a mad scramble for power, with commerce as its instrument ; the commercial policy of Henry no doubt helped England to take an early part in that scramble, but he neither foresaw it nor recognized its earliest symptoms—it was Spain and Portugal that divided the unknown world.

Summary. 1. The Hundred Years War was not so disastrous to England as to France, and in its early years it gave an impetus to trade and manufacture. The business of financing it, after some waste and fumbling, brought to the front Englishmen capable of handling large business and money affairs and helped the tendency, already appearing in the wool trade even in peace time, for money to accumulate in the hands of the few. War is

always a halcyon time for the capitalists as a class, even when it ruins some of its members.

2. War profoundly affected England's relations with Flanders, for the two countries were inextricably bound by commercial ties.

3. The Wars of the Roses had less economic effect than most civil wars, at the time. That they profoundly modified the events of the next century we shall see later.

4. State policy begins to take the place of municipal. Its chief points were :

(*a*) So to regulate trade that Englishmen might take full advantage of their position, climate, and products to secure for themselves the best of any bargain going.

(*b*) To keep within the realm an adequate supply of good coins, without which trade would flag.

(*c*) To seize markets in all parts of Europe wherever the flagging energy of rival alien merchants might give an opening.

5. The Staple Merchants gradually lost power, and their place was taken by a body of men who later organized themselves under the name of Merchant Adventurers.

6. Henry VII's policy was an extension and systematizing of that of his predecessors, but he placed commercial success in the first place and bent all his policy to secure for England full and free opportunities for trade. He was exceedingly successful, in spite of the handicap of a doubtful throne.

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4. The Mediaeval Church

THE story of the Church of the Middle Ages is, of course, a history in itself, but only certain aspects of that history concern us. Nor are we greatly occupied for our present purpose with its changes and developments. From the economic standpoint we need only ask three questions :

(*a*) How did the clergy live ? for they formed a much larger proportion of the population than now, and a very much more important one.

(*b*) How was poor relief managed in the centuries between the Norman conquest and the Reformation ?

(*c*) What was the parish, and how far did its organization affect the people and their lives ?

Wealth and Responsibilities of the Church. The collective wealth of the Church throughout these centuries was great. In the late fifteenth century it was reckoned by some that one-third of all the land was in the hands of priest or monk. On the other hand, this wealth was very unevenly distributed. The bishops, often the canons, and the large religious houses were wealthy landowners and feudal potentates, while the parish priest and the small community of monks and nuns lived lives little removed from that of the more easy villein or copyholder. All ranks found a home within the wide boundaries of Mother Church ; she offered the one career open to talent, for a bishopric was not altogether outside the possible ambition of the peasant's son. But while the boy cowherd might dream not too wildly impossible dreams of wealth and power and dignity, if he enlisted as the pledged soldier of the faith of Jesus of Nazareth and of his earthly representative, Gregory VII or Alexander VI, he was perhaps more likely to end his days as a humble parish priest, on an income sufficient to keep him in simple comfort doing useful work as one of the chief men of his village. The differences of rank in the Church were as great as those in the State ; the village priest was only slightly better educated and no better bred than the men whose souls he cared for, while the mitred abbot was a feudal lord who kept such state as a Bohun or a Courtenay might not surpass.

The wealth of the Church was drawn from three sources: endowed lands, tithe, gifts and offerings.

Church Land, which, as already mentioned, formed a considerable fraction of the country, was usually but not always held in frankalmoign.[1] Bishops and abbots, and even abbesses, often held their land by military tenure, most of them being tenants-in-chief of the Crown. In any case Church land fell,

[1] See p. 37.

quite simply, into the system of feudal tenure, even when the services paid for it were prayers for the soul instead of food for the body of the lord who gave it.

TITHE is, however, a far older thing than a feudal fief. From early Christian days the doctrine held that one-tenth of a man's goods was due to God, and the money so given was used for the relief of the sick and poor of the community. The payment

THE GREAT TITHE BARN, GREAT COXWELL

was enforced by church councils in 585 and 650, but in it was not made imperative by secular law till 787. O not in any sense a land tax, in an age when from land was the only wealth it soon came to appear to be such, the claim that a tenth of every source of man's wealth wa his Maker, was made and maintained with varying de success. Neither the fruits of commerce nor the pro man's income was considered exempt, at least by the There was a division of the tithe into 'Great Tithes' wine, and wool, and 'Small Tithes' of vegetables, fr

The tithe was not necessarily used in the parish in which it was raised, but in early days was handed over to the bishop to be used at his discretion. Later on it was allocated to special churches, but the idea of its general purpose for the whole diocese never quite died out. Originally it was divided into four parts, one for the bishop, one for the clergy, one for the church fabric, and one for the poor and sick. Later the bishop dropped out, and the tri-partite division was often ignored, but it never completely disappeared till the Reformation, and the relief of the poor was a moral if not a legal obligation on the receiver of the tithe.

Gifts and Offerings. These were numerous and of every conceivable kind. There were fees for services, marriages, burials, masses, &c., and gifts at special periods of the year. All these, even when in a sense voluntary, were so customary that the custom amounted to compulsion.

The Higher Clergy. At the head of the Church officialdom were the archbishops and bishops. In speaking of them it will be well first to get a clear idea of the mediaeval view of a bishop's office. We now regard a bishopric as an office for the performance of some spiritual duties with an endowment of money or lands for the carrying out of these duties. In the Middle Ages a bishopric was a feudal fief with certain spiritual duties attached to it. If we remember this, Henry II's action in making Becket archbishop becomes more understandable. A bishopric was usually very rich, that of Winchester owned fifty manors, many of them large. On several of them were official residences between which the bishop moved 'transacting business as he went, checking the figures of his bailiffs, deciding judicially disputed questions, conferring the tonsure on this or that youth of promise or tenant's son, making inquiry into the troubles of unruly convents, whiling away a vacant hour by taking a run with the hounds or seeing the falcons fly, while the produce of the manor disappeared in the many mouths of men and horses. For as he travelled his train was numerous and his luggage bulky.'[1]

[1] Stephens and Hunt, *History of the English Church*, iii. 225.

Against this wealth and luxury must be set many expenses. To get elected had cost him large sums, both in the English and the Papal Courts. During the vacancy of the see the king claimed all the income, even to the stored and the standing corn. Thus the bishop entered office heavily in debt and it was a good many years before he had paid it off. His hospitality was expected to be unlimited; custom decreed that he should combine the ostentation of a feudal baron and the reckless charity of a primitive Christian.

A MONK

The election of bishops had originally, at least in theory, belonged to the clergy of the diocese. After the time of Henry I and Anselm the election was by the Cathedral chapter, but as it took place in one of the royal chapels the king's wishes were not easily defied. If any such attempt were made an appeal might be made to the Pope; Rome usually took such an opportunity to install a candidate of her own.

The cathedrals were either the conventual church of some great religious house, or collegiate churches with secular canons. Originally these canons were the bishop's council, but that ceased and the dean and chapter became largely independent of episcopal control. The property of a cathedral church served by canons was usually divided into three parts, one for the bishop, one for the chapter as a whole, and the third divided into prebends which were the property of the individuals who held the stalls. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries non-residence became frequent and common life vanished. Marriage was not illegal, though forbidden by canon law, and it was not uncommon.

The Monasteries. These varied greatly in wealth and power. The largest held immense estates; some few abbots and abbesses held of the king by barony and ruled over a community number-

ing some hundreds, of religious, laybrothers or sisters, servants and workpeople. The Abbot of Battle was supreme for three miles round his abbey. He and his monks had free warren in all lands of their manors, exemption from toll in all markets and on all roads passing through the king's lands, and the right to capture deer in royal forests through which they passed. The Church of Battle Abbey had the right of sanctuary, and its Abbot could pardon any condemned criminal he chanced to meet anywhere. It was a current saying of the age that if the Abbot of Glastonbury could have married the Abbess of Shaftesbury their son would have been wealthier than the king. At the other extreme was the small house, consisting of some four or five monks or nuns, who must often have been hard put to it not to starve.

A PARISH PRIEST

The twelfth century was the time of the great foundations, by the late fifteenth the religious houses were struggling to keep what they had, while wealthy philanthropists turned their eyes towards municipal charity or patriotic ventures. The monasteries relied mainly on lands and tenements for their living, though gifts of all kinds were numerous, especially in certain districts. One of their resources must by no means be overlooked. It became common for great lords to build and endow new churches and then hand them over to the management of a neighbouring monastery. Such churches were said to be *appropriated* to the religious house, which usually kept the great tithes and installed a vicar to carry out the duties, leaving him the small tithes and other minor payments. In later days the monks were accused of abusing their trust, of retaining the revenues and leaving the churches unserved. The charge has been disputed and it seems uncertain how far the evil really extended. As landlords the

monks have been variously represented, by the one side as more tyrannous than any layman, by the other as fathers of the poor, dispensers of Christian charity, kindly lords of a loving and obedient peasantry. The truth seems on the whole to lie with the less kindly picture. We have seen how impossible the boroughs on monastic estates found it to free themselves, while sister towns were rising to freedom and opulence, and the hatred of the people in the Great Revolt is too evident to be ignored. It is probable, however, that while a reactionary church crushed all attempt at collective freedom on the part of its dependants, yet the relation between individuals was kindlier and more considerate. It was not usually the abbeys and priories that, seized by a ruthlessly commercial spirit, enclosed for sheep walks and cast out the labourer to starve. The type of mind that refuses justice but willingly gives charity is common in churches of every age and clime.

The Parish Clergy. There were three kinds of parish clergy, people whose business it was to minister to the spiritual needs of the district.

1. The RECTORS were priests of the parish churches whose incomes were drawn from the tithes, both great and small, from the offerings of parishioners and from glebe land, i. e. land belonging to the office and cultivated by the rector or later let at rent. They were quite comfortably off as a rule, though not wealthy. The duties attached to the office were not without expense. We have seen that in theory a third part of the tithe belonged to the poor, and this the rector who did his duty dispensed to the needy, the sick, and the wayfarer. Open hospitality to all comers was expected of him. Since it was not till the economic changes of the late fifteenth century that we find extreme poverty becoming a problem, we may conclude that the priests for the most part did perform this duty well. Possibly a good many 'undeserving poor' thereby got relief and were able to live more idly than nineteenth-century economists would approve, but taken all round the system seems to have met the needs of the society in which it worked. Of actual charges on

the rector's income the chief was the maintenance of the fabric of the chancel and of the ornaments and books.

2. Vicars. We have seen that many churches were appropriated to religious houses and that the monks paid a vicar to carry out the duties of parish priest. Sums were reserved out of the income for the vicar's use, and in the later centuries the bishops took care that these were adequate, and they also insisted that the vicar should have security of tenure. There was, however, considerable complaint, and the claim was made that the tithe of the parish should be spent in the parish. The claim never succeeded, for at the Dissolution the great tithes passed from the religious houses, not to the parish priests and the uses of religion, but to lay lords and private capitalists.

3. Stipendiary Priests. These were salaried priests paid either to take the place of or to assist the vicar or rector. Non-residence became a scandal towards the end of the Middle Ages and stipendiary priests were in considerable demand. Their salary was some five or six marks a year, but after the Black Death it rose to £10 or more. The bishops, just like the lay lords, struggled to keep the wages down and to prevent the clergy migrating to sea-ports to be chaplains to rich merchants, or to the households of country squires. It reads strangely to hear of wealthy prelates inveighing against men who refuse to officiate in parish churches for six marks a year, and Archbishop Islip exhausting his vocabulary on 'the said priests, pampered with excessive salaries' whom he orders under penalties to accept five or six marks a year and no more. However, economic forces were too strong for the rectors and bishops and the poorer clergy got their £10 and sometimes even claimed £20.

All parish clergy increased their income by marriage fees, charges for baptism, masses for the dead, and other semi-voluntary gifts, while Easter and other dues often amounted to a considerable sum.

Besides the duties of hospitality and charity already referred to the parish clergy had to meet other claims:

1. Taxes, which they paid like the rest of the world. These were levied by Convocation not by Parliament.

2. Papal demands for tenths, Peter's pence, procurations for cardinals and others. These were often a grievous burden, and were greatly resented.

3. Irregular expenses, such as subscriptions to help newly-made bishops to pay their debts, the cost of visitations of bishops and archdeacons, the maintenance of proctors sent to Convocation.

Poor Relief. It will be well to sum up the chief methods devised in mediaeval times for the relief of the poor. There were three main sources of provision within the Church:

(*a*) The charity of the parish priest, one-third of whose tithes was regarded as being ear-marked for this purpose. It was, however, not a legal obligation and he could evade it if he chose.

(*b*) The somewhat promiscuous hospitality of the monasteries. The Church certainly inculcated discrimination, but the virtue of charity was rated so highly that prudence and common sense were apt to be lost sight of in the glow of virtue attaching to the merely generous gift. The result undoubtedly was the creation of the sturdy vagabond, the idler who found his pilgrimage from monastery to monastery quite profitable and more pleasant than that of his modern descendant who wanders from one casual ward to the next. Opinions, however, vary as to the extent of the evil; the unemployed, who rapidly become the unemployable, were not sufficiently numerous to trouble either municipality or state before the late fifteenth century, so one feels that the changes of social organization rather than a too pitying indiscriminate charity were at the root of the trouble. There are some who maintain that monastic charity was getting less and less in the fifteenth century; be that as it may, there is no question that in earlier ages the monasteries fulfilled in this matter a great social need in a way that suited the age they lived in. In wild and desolate places they were havens of refuge to the traveller, as to all the weak and unprotected.

(*c*) Mediaeval Hospitals. Over 750 of these are known to have existed. They consisted of:—

(i) Homes for the sick, especially lepers. This terrible disease

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A MEDIAEVAL HOSPITAL. ST. CROSS, WINCHESTER

of leprosy was prevalent in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, began to lessen in the thirteenth and practically died out in the fourteenth. At one time there were over 200 leper hospitals. In early times lepers were not regarded as infectious, but later they were rigidly excluded from all social intercourse, even from the parish churches. There were other hospitals for the sick besides lepers, and most monasteries received and tended a few cases.

(ii) Hospitals for wayfarers were common in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These were mainly for the use of pilgrims. They declined in the fourteenth and fifteenth as pilgrimages became less fashionable, but there were always shelters for travellers in the north and at sea-ports.

(iii) Homes for the feeble and destitute also existed.

All of these hospitals were semi-religious communities, and were organized on the lines of a monastery. They were usually governed by wardens and the inmates were expected to lead the life of those devoted to religion as far as they were able. They were maintained by endowment, by legacies and gifts, often of lands and rents. Sometimes they received grants of fairs, as in the cases of St. Bartholomew's Fair and of the May Fair of St. James's Leper House. But all except the richest were dependent partly on casual charity. Even in early times some were controlled by the municipalities, and during the fifteenth century this method of control increased. Many were connected with the religious and craft gilds. They, however, decayed rapidly, sometimes owing to neglect on the part of the monasteries to which they were attached, but more often to bad administration by the wardens, who began to regard them as sinecures and mere sources of income.

Thus the main prop of the poor, the sick, and the destitute was undoubtedly the Church, but in the fifteenth century we find cases of the towns assuming charge of their own poor and making provision for them. We shall see later how the State eventually had to assume control.

Parish Finance. The parish was more than a mere ecclesiastical

division for organizing the clergy. It was a self-governing body of men and women for all sorts of purposes. It elected its own officials by direct vote of all adults male and female. These officials, called churchwardens, had very important and responsible duties. They might be and sometimes were women. In particular, on them fell the duty of keeping in repair the nave of the parish church, and they were by no means content to do the bare minimum. The parish took much pride in adorning and enriching its church, in providing beautiful and costly utensils and vestments, fine carvings and decorated windows. Gifts poured into the churchwardens' hands for such purposes. The various sources of the parish income were :

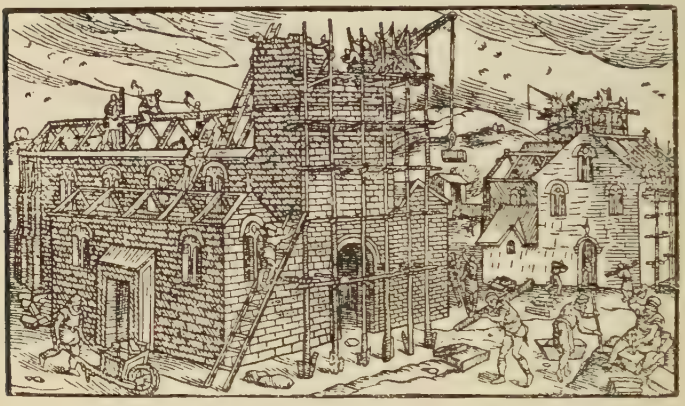
(*a*) Gifts of every kind, which were formed into the parish 'stock', or 'store'. These offerings were not from the rich, who, if they gave, gave endowments of lands or rents, but from the ordinary everyday folk. Rings, gowns, a ewer, three silver spoons, cows that might be hired out, sheep and even bees are among the gifts recorded. The stock was used, often hired out, as indeed were the church vestments ; the use of the best processional cross could be had for payment, even sometimes jewels for a bride to wear. All this would be managed by the churchwardens, whose accounts, where still existing, help us to realize the life of the age.

(*b*) Sometimes the parishioners levied on themselves a rate, which though voluntary was cheerfully paid.

(*c*) Another method of raising money was by collections and collective gifts. If a church needed rebuilding, or the parish wished to beautify it, collections would be made among the youths, or the maidens, or the wives, or bands of these would sally forth into the roads or by the bridges and take toll of passers by. With the money raised they would set to work. A small committee would visit some town or village famed for some beautiful building or work of art and get ideas. They then bought the timber and carted it home, while local workmen hewed and cut and carved till the beautiful beams and stalls, that have come down to us, were swung and fitted into place.

Every item of expense was entered, such as twopence for 2 lb. of 'talowe for the carpenters', though the bill for that trade alone might be £31, or £300 at least of modern money. In the same way if new books were wanted, the parchment was bought, the scribe engaged to copy, and the bookbinder to make the finished whole. The parish church of the Middle Ages was very literally the work of the hands of those who worshipped in it.

(*d*) Church Ales were a popular, if not so satisfactory a way of raising money. They were the equivalent of the modern



BUILDING A CHURCH

bazaar. Ale was brewed in large quantities and given to the church, then the parishioners assembled and drank for 'the good of the house'—the more you drank the larger the profit to the church. Such a combination of pleasure and charity was as dear to Englishmen of that age as of this.

(*e*) One other item brought grist to the churchwardens' mill, viz. burial fees. It cost money to open a grave in the churchyard, more to open one in the church; the fees went to the parish fund.

Women and the Church. The position of women in the Middle Ages was affected greatly by the monastic system, but the career thus offered them varied in scope and importance through the

centuries. During the seventh and eighth centuries the profession of a religious life seems to have afforded a career and a position, at any rate to special women, not equalled in any later age. Many of the monasteries founded at that moment of religious enthusiasm were joint communities of men and women, ruled by women. These abbesses were frequently women of royal birth, often founders or liberal benefactors of the foundation, and the position they occupied was one of political and social power. Abbess Hild of Whitby, the best known of these ladies, made her community one of the most noted in Europe for learning, for art, for religion, and for statesmanship. The common wealth of the monastery was great, the nuns corresponded with learned men throughout Christendom and showed themselves no mean Latin scholars, Cædmon was the pride of the great abbey, while five of its monks became bishops. Secular learning too was not despised and the nuns were the craftswomen of an age when the beauty of English weaving and embroidery made it known and sought for on the Continent. Illumination of manuscripts, nursing of the sick, and farming on no small scale were among the occupations of the inhabitants. The abbesses of Saxon monasteries held lands as great thanes and were called to attend the Witenagemot. Hild's presidency of the great ecclesiastical Synod of Whitby is too well known to need more than passing mention.

But between the eighth and the eleventh centuries there is a terrible blank. The inroads of the Danes and the subsidence of the wave of religious enthusiasm resulted in the decay and disappearance of many of the monastic houses. With the Normans came a revival, but never again did the women's houses take the old rank. When the houses were restored, too often it was for men alone; Whitby, Coldingham, Ely, Repton, Wimborne and many another revived, but as houses of monks alone. New houses founded for women were not given the dignity of the old. Most of them were priories, paying allegiance to a neighbouring house of monks or even to the rector of a parish. A few great abbeys for women persisted through the centuries—

Shaftesbury, Barking, and St. Mary's Winchester—with great ladies at their head who owed military service to the king and were summoned in due course to Parliament, but they were few in number. Most of the nunneries were small and far from wealthy, often in the fifteenth century so poor as to be within danger of starving the inmates. The new order of St. Gilbert of Sempringham, founded in the twelfth century and known as the Gilbertine Order, formed a kind of double monastery of nuns and canons, but it was never rich nor aristocratic. St. Gilbert seems to have founded it as a refuge for the poorer class of women, a function it served faithfully. At the time of the dissolution both monasteries and nunneries were in a state of decay. The charges of immorality and loose living, brought so freely by the commissioners, were certainly not substantiated in the case of the women religious, but there is no doubt that, either from poverty or mismanagement, many nunneries had ceased to be the busy and orderly hives of industry they had been in the past; religious enthusiasm was waning and the desire for community life less. Still, it is to be noted, the women quitted their convent life with regret, very few accepting the permission to return to the world. The pensions paid to the nuns are interesting and would be more so if we could know what relation they bore to the needs of the recipients. They varied from £200 paid to Alice Jordan, Abbess of Syon, who was a mere nominee of the king installed to carry out the surrender and whose large annuity suggests a bribe more than anything else, down to small sums of £1 and £2. Abbesses usually got about £26, the cases of large sums like £100 or £133 6*s.* 8*d.* being few. £5 or £6 to the prioress and from £1 to £3 for the rest are common sums. Probably it was possible to live on £2 a year, provided they had friends to go to.

The wealth of the nunneries was drawn from the same sources as that of the men's houses—lands, tenements, and titles of appropriated churches. The same claims of hospitality and charity were made on them and there is reason to believe these claims were duly met.

The religious houses fulfilled one function that lapsed entirely from the sixteenth till the late nineteenth century. The education of women was for the most part in their hands. How far it extended it is difficult to say, but it is certain that many of the daughters of the upper and middle classes were trained by nuns in such knowledge as the laity shared and in habits of right conduct and good breeding. It may have been a very inadequate training, but it was better than the nothing that was the girls' portion from the date of the Reformation till a time still within memory. The dissolution of the monasteries was probably for the nation a social and intellectual advance, for women it proved to be the closure of every avenue to a rational life for the unmarried, and a theft of endowments that had on the whole been for their welfare and for which no equivalent, not even a college at Oxford, was given them. In the age of rampant commercialism that followed, women like the poor found neither a living nor a calling.

PART IV. 1500–1660

1. Rural England in the Sixteenth Century

We have seen that the fifteenth century was on the whole a period of comparative prosperity for the dwellers in villages, and we must remember that villages then held the greater part of the population. We have also seen that towards the end of the century signs were appearing that new forces were at work, whose tendency seemed to be to depress some and exalt others, threatening indeed a serious disturbance of the equilibrium of the state. Before we follow out the working of these forces to their disastrous end, let us take a look at the countryside of 'merrie England' on the eve of the modern world.

The Various Classes of the Rural Community. Leaving aside for the moment the lord of the manor we will look at the condition of all those men whose status we have traced from the *liberi homines*, the *villani* and the *servi* of Domesday Book, through economic ups and downs to the dawn of the sixteenth century.

(*a*) First in importance, though small in number, are the Freeholders. They are now men of very varied economic position, but separated from other workers on the land by their privileged legal and political position. Some are men of substance, whose sons, if not themselves, are likely to join the ranks of country gentlemen or to become men of power and position as lawyers and state officials; many are mere peasants farming a few acres and living hardly by their personal toil. But they are the freest men in England, men with freedom in their blood, who for generations have 'looked the whole world in the face', owing no man anything. Most of them hold in free socage and the obligations of that tenure have long been of the slightest. Their rents have become negligible with the rising value of land, and much freehold land has managed to slip manorial control

altogether. The substantial yeoman of England, secure in the ownership of his land, living largely on the produce of it and of his own hands and living exceedingly well as far as food and clothing go, is the pride of the nation and the backbone of its independence. Besides this, the freeholder for generations has been used by the state in every conceivable kind of local government; he is a man whose eyes are on state affairs, who by the end of the fifteenth century has largely secured control of the public purse, who sits on juries where 'he cares not whom he displeaseth, so he pleaseth his own conscience'. The confining of the franchise to the 40s. freeholder by the Act of 1430 has given him an importance in the state out of all proportion to the extent of his acres or the number of his fellows. His legal security in the land he holds and his experience in courts enables him to defend himself against the storms that threaten him and to emerge in safety to a century of peace and prosperity. It was well for England that she then had men who, without being wealthy or powerful, were independent enough to resist oppression.

(*b*) THE CUSTOMARY TENANTS. But the bulk of the landholders of England are in a far more precarious position. Most of them are the descendants of those old villani and servi, who have gradually freed themselves from the manorial yoke up to a certain point; unfortunately the freeing process is not complete and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it is to encounter a serious setback.

Lowest among these customary tenants at the opening of the sixteenth century we still find VILLEINS BY BLOOD, bondmen in legal status, though often well to do and prosperous. They are not numerous, probably only a few thousand, but they exist and we find them paying 'merchet' for leave to marry and 'chevage' for permission to live outside the manor, or sums amounting to hundreds of pounds to be quit for ever of the degrading obligations. They are all gone by the end of the sixteenth century, and are not of great importance during any part of it, but their existence shows the strength of survival and

illustrates forcibly the slowness of the death of manorial custom.

The COPYHOLDER holds his land by copy of the court roll and therefore has some security against being turned out, but the security falls short of certainty by a good deal. He is the descendant of the villein of the thirteenth century, and though the king's courts have recently taken to defending him against his lord, there is no one rule for the country. It all depends on the custom of the particular manor. If he can show that for a long time the custom has been for copyholds to descend from father to son, or that he holds for so many lives, he is fairly safe, or at least handicapped only as the poor man is in every age when it comes to legal action against a richer. Even then, unless there is a fixed custom of the manor as to the amount of fine to be paid when a holding changes hands, he may be driven from his land by an exorbitant demand. It is this question of insecurity of tenure that is the battle-ground of the sixteenth century.

As to his position economically, the copyholder is often a very well-to-do farmer, though he may be of any rank of wealth from the farmer of some hundreds of acres to a mere cottager with three or four.

The TENANT-AT-WILL is also a customary tenant and is of course in a precarious position.

The LEASEHOLDER is protected by his lease, but no further, and there is nothing to prevent the rent being raised at the end of the lease. Until 1530 the heir of the lord could repudiate the lease. The custom of fines has spread from copyhold to leasehold and a landlord can make the fine so high as to be impossible to the small man.

The Custom of the Manor. It will be well to inquire at this point what forces tended to protect the peasant in his coming struggle with the new type of landlord. His main defence lay in what was known as the 'custom of the manor'. This was a great deal more than anything we should imply by the term nowadays. It was unwritten law, handed on from generation to generation in each manor; it covered the minutest details

of village life, not merely the rules governing the relations between lord and peasant, the heriots, the fines, the rights of felling timber, grazing beasts, &c., but it determined even the doings of the villager himself, to whom he might leave his property, the rights of his wife to dower, or of the kin to guardianship. For some time too the king's courts of equity had been in the habit of deciding cases by inquiry into this 'custom' to which the parties appealed. We are in the habit of regarding 'custom' as an undesirable drag on the wheels of progress, as buttressing the vested interests of birth and wealth, rather than as the prop of the poor man fighting for his right to live. But in the sixteenth century it was the rich man who wanted change and progress, who found this 'custom of the manor' barring his path and who used his power in the expanding state to get rid of or at least to evade it. The struggle between 'custom' and the new 'business' ideals is the story of the sixteenth century.

In the meanwhile the position of the peasant was, and had been for a century, one of considerable prosperity. There had been signs of the coming changes, some oppression and misery had already appeared, but so far the majority of the villages of England were happy and prosperous. Of the peasant 'the picture we get is of an open-handed, turbulent, large-eating and deep-drinking people, much given to merriment both coarse and refined; according to modern standards very ignorant, yet capable of swift enthusiasm, litigious, great sticklers for their rights, quick to use force in defence of them, proud of their independence, and free from the grosser forms of poverty which crush the spirit'.[1] There is no doubt that the peasantry of England in that age were better off materially and consequently freer of spirit and more independent in character than that of neighbouring nations. Throughout the century the turbulence of the workers is a constant source of anxiety to the government. They rise again and again, to protect their fields from exploiting landlords, to fight for the old religion or to die for the new.

[1] R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 132.

How came it that this sturdy stock sank during the next three centuries to a level of physical and mental degradation which is now almost beyond belief? The story of what Thorold Rogers calls 'a conspiracy concocted by the law and carried out by parties interested in its success, to cheat the English workman of his wages, to tie him to the soil, to deprive him of hope, and to degrade him into irremediable poverty' has now to be told.

Wool v. Corn. We have already seen, in an earlier chapter, the field over which the first battle is to be fought. By the end of the fifteenth century the outcry against enclosures is already making itself heard. Let us review a little what we know of the causes.

There were four different movements all resulting in what came to be known as 'enclosures', i. e. the fencing off of pieces of land each in the possession of one man and over which no one else had any rights.

(*a*) The first of these was a tendency to group together the strips of the open fields. It will be remembered that an ordinary villein's holding originally consisted of a number, often as many as thirty, of these strips, not lying side by side but scattered in all parts of the cultivated area. The early fifteenth century had been a time of prosperity to the peasantry, wages had risen, labour rents had been commuted for small money payments and it was not difficult for a thrifty man to save and prosper. With the possibility of keeping a plough team of his own and of paying the high rent demanded for meadow pasture, his rights in the open fields, of help with his ploughing and of pasture over the stubble, became of less value, and it would pay him better to get his strip by purchase or exchange together into one piece and keep it to himself. He would, of course, have to buy out the rights of his fellow villagers before he could actually enclose the land and this need kept the change from proceeding very fast, but there is evidence to show that through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries this consolidation of strips was going on. The old equality of possession was coming to an end and the rich copyholder appeared, farming, not 15 or 30 acres, but

over 100. The lords too rented their demesne land in larger parcels, usually on lease. Now this kind of enclosure is praised by the writers of the time. It produced much larger crops and could carry more stock than the open-field system at its best; it did not greatly reduce the number of workers and so create unemployment, and it helped to build up a sturdier and more independent peasantry.

(*b*) The second movement was towards an increasing approvement (conversion to cultivation) of the waste. Surrounding every village was a large area of waste land, used in summer to pasture cattle and sheep and pigs under the care of the village herdsman. Now this waste land was an essential part of the village economy; without it the farmer could hardly grow his corn, for to grow corn he must plough, to plough he must keep horses or oxen and must feed them. In the autumn for a short time he could turn them loose on the stubble of the reaped fields, but for the spring and summer he would need pasture land or he could not keep them alive. He eked out the profits of his strips of land by selling or using milk, butter, cheese and wool. For all this pasture land was essential. When the lords took to enclosing portions of the waste land, and the peasant found to his dismay that, unless he were a freeholder, he had no rights that the law courts would recognize, he raised a loud and not unjustified complaint. The lord was taking his commons, and without his common rights he could not live.

(*c*) We saw in Part III something of the cause that set the movement for enclosure for pasture in motion. Edward III's policy had given enormous impetus to the woollen industry and the demand for wool was insatiable. The landlord's position in the fifteenth century had not been easy; in the sixteenth, with prices rising and rents almost stationary, it is not surprising that he took the easiest way of making up his income by enclosing both demesne and waste land to make large sheep runs. He did not take very much care of what happened to his unfortunate tenants deprived of their pasture, or of the labourers deprived of their employment. It was this sort of enclosure that produced

distress and was condemned by writers like More and preachers like Latimer.

(*d*) Sometimes the waste was enclosed for arable farming, and in this case though the copyholder suffered loss, or diminution, of his pasture rights, the labourer was not dispossessed or injured. Farming in this way was better and more productive than by the open-field system and is strongly advocated by writers on agriculture during the century, such as Fitzherbert and Tusser. The government, though it made repeated efforts to stop enclosure for pasture, had no objection to enclosure for arable and a good deal was actually carried out. Some historians hold that a very large fraction of the enclosures of the sixteenth century were of this latter kind, but it seems difficult to account for the constant complaint of contemporary writers, statesmen, and others, if that were so. That towards the end of the century there was increased corn growing is shown by the record that in spite of increasing population imported corn was not common and only for the use of London, while during the first thirty and last thirty years of the century the export increased rapidly. In some counties much of the enclosure was probably for arable, but that generally there was much distress caused by evictions for the creation of sheep runs seems certain. Tudor statesmen did not trouble about imaginary grievances, and undoubtedly they were gravely concerned at this particular discontent.

While we may join with the philanthropists of the age in condemning an economic change carried through without any consideration for the weaker and poorer members of the state, we must also recognize that open-field farming was clumsy, unproductive, and incapable of improvement. A system which allowed a few unenlightened villagers to prevent any changes, because they held that what was good enough for their fathers was good enough for them, was bound inevitably to break down. So little change could be made under it that early sixteenth-century farming differed little from that of the thirteenth and in some points was worse. The implements were the same, though cartwheels now had an iron rim; oxen still drew a heavy wooden plough, which had

perhaps a little more iron than before; draining and manuring had not advanced, some manures like marl, soot and lime seem even to have fallen into disuse; ewes were still milked. Other disadvantages of the system were the longer time of winter-feed owing to the lack of permanent pasture, and the necessity for all farmers breeding young animals at the same time and so bringing them to market all together. Where ground was enclosed

PLOUGHING AND DIGGING. Second half of fifteenth century.

the land yielded nearly double the amount of corn, and the weight of beasts was raised in like proportion. On the other hand, the greedy lords over-reached themselves in one direction. Sheep fattened on enclosed pastures were heavier and bigger, but their wool also grew coarser, and during the sixteenth century English wool ceased to be in demand abroad for the finer kinds of cloth. It was ousted by Spanish.

Growth of London and its effect on Agriculture. There was, however, another movement which did more in the long run to stop enclosures for pasture than any government action or

public denunciation. Between 1534 and 1634 the population of England, stationary for two centuries after the Great Pestilence, rose 50 per cent., and that of London was multiplied five times. The feeding of the capital city during the latter part of the sixteenth century became a problem of national importance. In the chapter on Tudor government we shall see how this influenced the statesmen of the time and was a check on the too rapid development of a mercantile policy.

The increase of London's population was due to the expansion of its trade, which in the two centuries 1500–1700 rose from 40 per cent. to 80 per cent. of that of the whole nation. The situation caused a curious reversal of mediaeval policy; it became the business of the municipal government to attract corn to the city and for this purpose it fixed, not maximum prices as in the old days, but minimum. 'Whatsoever persone that will bryng Whete or Rye good swete and merchaintable to this Citie to be sold shall have for every quarter of Whete xs. and for every quarter of Rye 6s. 8d.' Non-citizens were freed from toll if they brought corn, and foreign merchants encouraged to import it. Lastly, a regular system of storing was adopted and a large granary established at the Bridgehouse. From 1543–65 constant storage was made and the corn sold whenever the market supplies grew small. In 1578 the duty of keeping the granary full was handed over to the gilds, and the system only died out slowly during the seventeenth century.

It can easily be seen that the supply of a city holding 5 per cent. of the whole population of the country must have given a stimulus to corn growing. Up to 1500 London grew its own corn or drew it from its immediate neighbourhood, but during the sixteenth century its needs took it farther afield. Not only Kent and Berkshire were drawn on, but Suffolk, Norfolk, and even distant Yorkshire, with occasional contributions from Bristol or Newcastle. Lynn, in particular, which was the market-centre for the great basin of the Ouse, sent increasing quantities to London; by 1600 it was shipping to the metropolis sometimes as much as 10,000 quarters in a year.

The Rise of Prices. There was another factor in the breaking up of the stability of rural society. From 1500 onwards we find a steady, though at first gradual, rise in prices all round. Then soon after 1540 they rose rapidly so that the price of wheat was doubled. What was the main cause of this change is much disputed, but no one denies that two events were influential in

A BLACKSMITH

bringing it about: (*a*) the discovery of the silver mines of Mexico, (*b*) Henry VIII's debasement of the coinage.

An enormous increase in the quantity of silver in the world, in an age when coins were nearly all of that metal, was bound to lessen its value. Just as an overstocked market of geese and turkeys at Christmas will make them cheap, so an oversupply of silver makes it cheap. If the presence of more turkeys makes them worth fewer pieces of silver, the existence of more pieces of silver will make them worth less turkey or butter or corn. That is, prices go up. Throughout Europe this process was

LONDON
Mercers
Grocers
Drapers
Fishmongers
Goldsmiths
Skinners
Merchantaylors
Haberdashers
Salters
Ironmongers
Vintners
Clothworkers
Scala passuum 5 pedum
Islington
Grays
Lambeth
Parish Church
Powles
Tower
THAMY
Peter Vanden Kerre fecit 1593

going on during the sixteenth century as Mexican and Peruvian silver filtered slowly east and north. People were puzzled, they did not understand ; everything got dearer and people got poorer, except a few obvious profiteers, who in some mysterious manner unknown to their fathers were piling up wealth.

Ignorant of the forces at work or careless of anything but his own power and pleasure, Henry VIII in 1543 took measures that increased the trouble. He debased the coinage, i. e. he issued coins which, instead of 18 pennyweights of alloy in 12 ounces, the rest being silver, had 2 ounces of alloy in 12, and in 1546 as much as 8 ounces in 12 ; under Edward VI the real value of the shilling was less than $2\frac{3}{4}d.$ Now for a time a country can play these games with its coinage just as it can issue paper money and within its own borders nothing startling may happen. But England had considerable foreign trade and foreign merchants were not going to take $2\frac{3}{4}d.$ worth of silver and call it a shilling. In foreign exchange it is only the actual value of the metal which counts—the king's head on it has no longer any magic property. Hence prices of all imported goods rose rapidly and it was not long before home-made goods rose to meet them. The rich man and the landlord began to find his income curiously insufficient. A rent roll of £300 a year procured him only as much as he used to be able to buy for £200 ; something must be done. Many of his rents he could not alter, they had been fixed for centuries by the 'custom of the manor', but leaseholders and copyholders not by inheritance were at his mercy. He could refuse to renew leases except on greatly increased rents, he could increase the renewal fines to the limit of possible payment. Even the good landlord, anxious for the welfare of his tenants, was almost forced into some such deeds of oppression, for he often had to make those whom he could oppress pay for the immunity of those he could not. Land values were increasing and the freeholder or copyholder with fixed rent was making a good thing out of the rising market prices for his stock ; the 'unearned increment' was his and not his landlord's. To make up for this the lord raised the rent of

his leases often far above what increased prices might justify. He must either do this or be content with diminished income. Different men acted in different ways, some kindly, some tyrannous, but the old security and stability were gone.

OLD LONDON BRIDGE

But while the old ways had to be changed for the landlord and a more commercial spirit to dominate his actions, the wage labourer, whether in town or country, was more seriously affected. Prices rose rapidly and his wages, as is always the case, did not keep pace with them. At the beginning of the century an artisan in the country earned 3*s.* a week when wheat was at 4*s.* 0¾*d.* the

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, THE BEAR GARDEN AND THE GLOBE THEATRE

quarter. In 1533 he could earn 4*s.* a week, but wheat was 7*s.* 8*d.* the quarter. In 1564 his wages had risen to 9*d.* a day but wheat was 19*s.* 9¾*d.* the quarter, by 1610 his wages were 10*d.* a day and wheat 40*s.* 4*d.* the quarter. The case of the unskilled labourer was worse. Rogers has estimated that while in 1495 fifteen weeks' work would provision his household for the year, by 1610 not even in fifty-two weeks, working every day except Sunday, would he achieve the same result. We must not forget either that wages were fixed by the employers and there was no appeal. The preambles to acts of parliament may express sympathy for the 'grief and burden of the poor labourer', but as the acts go on to place him at the mercy of the Justices of the Peace, who were all of the employer class, we may regard them as mere play to the gallery. Worse even than their attempts to keep down wages in the face of rising prices was their distortion of the conspiracy laws and of a law of Edward VI forbidding combination to force a rise in wages. We shall see later how the Law of Settlement completed the labourer's slavery.

The Capitalist and the Unemployed. Quite early in the sixteenth century the appearance of large numbers of unemployed is noted in every country in Europe. Times were changing, and while in the past the lords sought for labourers, the labourers were now being forced to seek for work. The causes of this change, that were common to all Europe, were :

(*a*) The break up of the feudal system and consequent disbanding of retainers. Louis XI in France, the great commercial towns of Germany, and Henry VII in England were all in one century asserting the dominance of law over force. Consequently large numbers of men-at-arms were turned out to prey on the public, for they were ignorant of any craft and despised husbandry.

(*b*) The rise of prices due to the introduction of Mexican silver was general and produced distress everywhere.

(*c*) Manufactures on a large scale were beginning to replace craft work, and the consequent ups and downs of trade, so well known in modern times but unheard of in the Middle Ages,

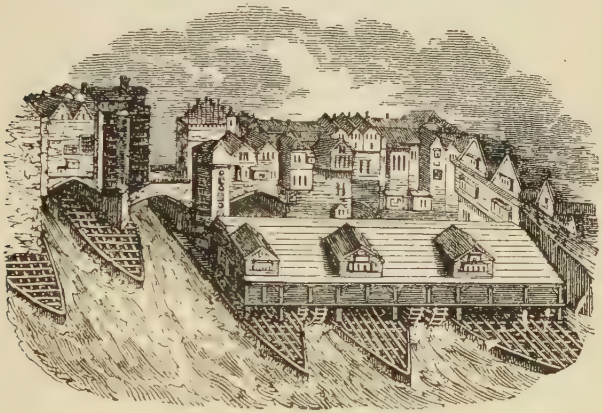
began to affect the worker, so that often he found himself with no work to do and faced with starvation.

Besides these three causes, common to the whole of Europe, England had two others peculiar to herself :

(*a*) The conversion of large tracts of land to sheep farming, which we have already described.

(*b*) The dissolution of the monasteries and the religious gilds.

The dissolution caused the wildest speculation in land, and men who bought land as a commercial speculation expected it



THE BRIDGE HOUSE

to pay like any other investment of capital. It was this new type of landlord who did much of the enclosing and cared little for the families he displaced or the labourers he underpaid. The dissolution of the religious gilds, many of which were thrift societies, and the confiscations of every penny of their funds which could not be shown to be free from even a remotely religious object, added to the poverty and to the instability of the peasant class.

The result of all these combined events was the creation of a class of ' vagrom men ', estimated by thousands even in early sixteenth-century writings, consisting not merely of the impotent

and diseased or of women and children driven from their homes, but of sturdy men capable and often willing to work, but for whom no work could be found. Naturally they became first a public nuisance and later a public scandal. 'Not only did they break into houses by night and pilfer the pig and the poultry, but they were daring enough to pass a hook through the windows and draw the clothes off sleeping men; to rob men on the highway who were travelling home from fairs, and to come by night to lonely houses and force the owners to deliver up what money they had on the premises.'[1] Many migrated to the towns, and slums and their attendant evils became a serious problem for the civic fathers.

The Tudor peace helped on the accumulation of capital and the commercializing of land holding. In the centuries that went before land was of value according to the number of men it could support—a great lord was he whose estates supplied him with a small army. These lords were gone for good and evil, swallowed up in the suicidal wars of the Roses. The new men were of a different order. They were of two kinds, the business man out to make his land pay, and the courtier and absentee landlord who left his estate to a manager, but demanded a maximum income. Neither sort was propitious for the labourer or the tenant unprotected by law or custom. The rich merchant who invested in land treated it as he treated his merchandize, the men on it were only valuable if they produced profits, the cash connexion replaced the human tie. The human tie had not always been a kindly one; cruelty and oppression were common enough in an age of force, but the cruelty was a personal thing for which some one was responsible though he might be above punishment; the cruelties of a commercial age are too apt to be the result of forces but little understood, for which no individual is solely responsible and are all the more difficult to remedy. In the Middle Ages a man's affairs were everybody's business; his rights, his wrongs, his ill-luck or his evil doing were within public knowledge and public remedy. The sixteenth

[1] Leonard, *The Early History of English Poor Relief*, p. 12.

century brings in the age of the individual, the principle of 'every man for himself'. The strong took the best of everything equally in both ages, but in the earlier times society was so linked together that he was unable to repudiate all responsibility for the weak he exploited, while in the age just opening the bands were to be loosed and the sinister divorce of power and wealth from responsibility grow more and more frequent, till it culminated in the horrors of the industrial revolution.

The courtier and absentee landlord was no better, from the tenants' point of view, than the upstart merchant who believed that land should pay. It is well sometimes to remember that the Pembrokes, the Raleighs, the Grenvilles and the Herberts, immortalized by song, romance and adventure, were men who not only lived by estates carved out of prosperous monastic lands, often with repudiation of all the rights of tenants and labourers, but who either so drained these estates as to rouse the peasantry to rebellion or adopted the even simpler plan of evicting the villagers and enclosing the village. 'The brilliant age which begins with Elizabeth gleams against a background of social squalor and misery. The descendant of the illiterate, bloody-minded baron who is muzzled by Henry VII becomes a courteous gentleman who rhapsodizes in verse at the Court of Gloriana. But all that the peasants know is that his land-agents are harsher.'[1]

Agrarian Discontent. The result of all these changes was a widespread discontent. Throughout the century there were constant riots and risings of a more or less formidable nature. They are not indiscriminate murder and arson by hordes of starving peasants, but are nearly always organized, often very effectively so, and are led, not by adventurers with nothing to lose, but by men of substance who hold not unimportant offices. Sometimes the village is called out by its officers, the constable or the bailiff, to pull down fences or scatter sheep. It must be remembered too that the objects of the rioters were not revolutionary but conservative. It was the landlord who wanted

[1] R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 193.

changes and the peasant who resisted them. Nay, more, it was the landlords who were breaking the law, and the peasants who rioted to get it enforced. For the government, as we shall see in another chapter, had good reason in this case to support the poor against the rich. Every few years we find agrarian risings, some small, some great, some local, some extending through several counties. Ket's Rebellion in 1549 was only such a rising on a large scale. Even the Pilgrimage of Grace, though its cause was mainly the attack on the monasteries, had its agrarian side, and Aske asserted that enclosures were part of the discontent. The peasantry in fact were still independent enough to fight for what they conceived to be their rights, their claim to the farms held by their ancestors and their right to terms of tenure by which they could live. It was the upstart lord with his new-fangled ideas and utter carelessness of anything but his own comfort and pleasure that was the wrong and the innovation, and the English peasant rose again and again to defend his land from the spoiler. That he failed in the end to protect himself against the new spirit was part of the price of that spiral advance that men call progress, and it was a heavy price. It turned 'merrie England' into a 'nation of shopkeepers', whose 'business principles' became accepted as a rule of life up to the eve of the Great War.

AN ELIZABETHAN MANSION.
Barlborough Hall, 1583–4.

Condition of the Wealthy. Gloomy as is the picture of rural England shown above, destined to become gloomier as the centuries advance, there is a brighter aspect that must not be

forgotten. The advance in civilization made by the upper classes is a fact of supreme importance, though it has too often been treated as if it were the only fact of the century. Contrast the pictures handed down to us of Warwick the king-maker and of Sidney who wrote *Arcadia*, compare not only their minds but their outward aspect, the houses they lived in, their tastes, occupations and amusements. The gulf is nearly as wide as between George Washington and a Red Indian brave. It is only a century that lies between, but such a century as had only

A VILLAGE STREET

one precedent in history. We talk of the age of Pericles and of the age of Elizabeth and rightly, but we must also remember that the glories of both were built on marshy foundations; the slave and the 'rogue and vagabond' lived side by side with Pheidias and Shakespeare. Still the advance in material civilization of the well-to-do deserves attention. In rural England sprang up those beautiful mansions, the survivals of which are now so cherished. Round them too grew gardens, and the majority of our vegetables and many of our fruits date from the 'spacious days'. We have already noted the effect of a more scientific interest in farming and the improvements advocated by Fitzherbert, Tusser and others. The aggregate wealth of

England was undoubtedly increased; as peace and law and order grew, England became a land of beauty and of plenty. That the plenty reached too often the greedy hands of the few, that beauty and the means to lead a gracious life became the prerogative of the rich instead of the heritage of all, so mar the picture to twentieth-century eyes as almost to hide its beauties. Still it was an age of advance, though only to the vanguard of the nation.

Summary. 1. As the sixteenth century opened, the rural population of England was on the whole prosperous and contented, but this prosperity was not securely grounded. The bulk of the customary tenants were inadequately protected in the courts as to their rights in the land, and the wage-earner depended for his position on the continuance of a state of things in which the supply of labour was less than the demand. The freeholder and copyholder by inheritance with a fixed fine alone were in a position to resist the economic changes that were already threatening.

2. The growth of English wool manufacture and the consequent demand for wool tempted the landowner to stretch his legal rights to their utmost to enable him to overcome any 'customs' that stood in the way of his turning a number of small arable farms into sheep-runs. Hence arose much discontent and distress, which continued for three-quarters of the century.

There was also a movement to enclose for arable farming which was more productive and profitable thus than under the open-field system. There was less resistance to this as it did not throw men out of employment. It did, however, tend to deprive the ordinary customary tenant of his waste land.

3. Towards the end of the century and on to 1660 there was a demand for more corn and arable farming again became a profitable investment. This was largely due to the growth of London and some towns, caused by the great impetus given to trade.

4. The continuous rise of prices made matters difficult for all classes. The landlord found his income lessening, the wage-

earner that his real wages were diminishing almost to vanishing point. The only class which did not suffer was that of the small freeholder, who lived chiefly on the product of his own farm and sold merely his surplus.

5. These disintegrating forces at work produced on the one hand the capitalist who invested in land as a business speculation and the unemployed labourer who rapidly became the unemployable. Neither class was a benefit to the state. The capitalist heralded the modern industrial system and the eventual depopulation of the rural districts, the Elizabethan 'rogue and vagabond' was the forerunner of that terrible army that is the waste product of modern civilization, the elimination of which is still an unsolved problem.

6. The sixteenth century was an age of great advance for the fortunate classes, but their advance was bought by a relative retrogression of the bulk of the population which created a contrast of wealth and misery, of knowledge and ignorance, that was bound in the future to be a cause of bitterness and strife.

2. Industry and the Towns from 1500-1660

WE have seen that during the fifteenth century a profound change had begun in the organization of industry and of town life. The gild system was breaking down, the day of the capitalist had already dawned. During the next 150 years we have to trace this change until the general establishment of the new system, to mark an astounding rise in the apparent wealth of the nation, together with an ever-increasing concentration of riches and power in the hands of the few.

In the fourteenth century we saw the industry of England organized in a number of Craft Gilds, the members of which combined in each individual the work of maker and seller, the whole industry, from the raw material to the supplying of the finished article to the consumer, being controlled by the men of the craft. The master-craftsman worked with his apprentices

and journeymen, acted as their foreman, was at the same time their employer and sold the finished article to those who needed it. We have seen how gradually he dropped one function after another until by the beginning of the sixteenth century the journeymen were sharply distinguished from their employers and, after a short fight for freedom, were forced to subordinate their interests to those of the masters organized in the Livery Company. At the other end of the scale the craftsman was rapidly being deprived of his function as shopkeeper and the actual provision of the public was assumed by men who occupied themselves entirely with the commercial side of the business. Two kinds of capitalists thus appeared on the scene and the history of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is the story of their fight for control of the industry. On the one hand, the merchant capitalist controlled the market by which the craftsman could dispose of his wares; on the other, the successful craftsman could by dint of his capital affect the market by controlling production and starving out his smaller competitors. The two kinds of capital struggled for supremacy in almost every industry and the more complicated its process the more confused was the fight. The various branches of the cloth trade give perhaps the best illustration. Right up to the time of James I the bulk of English cloth was exported as 'white cloth', i.e. undyed and unfinished. It went to Flanders and France to be finished according to the taste of the foreign market. This suited the drapers and the merchants of cloth very well, but was by no means so pleasing to the Fullers and Shearmen, who, in London, combined about 1527, got themselves incorporated as the Clothworkers and set about designs to prevent this loss of possible work. They secured for a time the support of the government in suppressing the export of unfinished cloth and the battle went on throughout the century between them and the drapers. We find that as a whole in London the commercial interests predominated, but in provincial towns the industrial.

Spread of Manufactures to the Country and the Suburbs. We

have already noted that the exclusive policy of the gilds had driven enterprising capitalists to turn to the possibilities of the country districts, where the power of the gild ordinances did not extend. Thus all East Anglia became covered with little manufacturing villages where the employer could get cheap

A SHOEMAKER'S SHOP

labour without interference from the gilds. The gilds of the towns of course tried to get control of these illicit workers and were, as we shall see, supported by the government, but the attempt was only successful for a short time. The London suburbs grew in the same way. Craftsmen wishing to set up without the heavy expenses attaching to gild membership removed themselves across the river to Southwark or Bermondsey; aliens rejected by the short-sighted policy of the city authorities

settled at Spitalfields ; Whitechapel and St. Giles' were rapidly being built over. Within the city too were thousands of workers skilled and unskilled drawn thither by golden dreams of its wealth and luxury. The city fathers tried to get control of the suburban workers, but the capitalist interest was too strong for them ; the government, for its part, tried to stop the influx by forbidding the building of more houses and by pulling down slum dwellings. As a method of stopping an overcrowding that brought plague and pestilence such measures hardly strike one as showing foresight or statesmanship.

The Gilds. We left the gilds at the end of the fifteenth century organized into two parts, the masters of 'the clothing'[1] and 'the yeomanry', who consisted of journeymen and the smaller masters. Of these groups the second was entirely subordinate to the first. During the next century the yeomanry underwent a striking change. As the journeymen found it increasingly difficult to become masters and set up for themselves, they ceased to be content with the position of tutelage as resident servants in their master's house. They began to claim the right to take their work to their own homes, for they were no longer boys in their twenties and they desired to marry and live their own lives. Thus arose a new system by which they were paid by piecework done in their own homes. Such an arrangement is known as the 'DOMESTIC SYSTEM', which still survives to-day in certain industries, mostly sweated. Now it is easily seen that an enterprising journeyman might take the step of adding to his earnings by buying a little raw material, working it up and selling the product on his own account. He would not be able, of course, to compete with the wealthy master for whom he worked, and would be dependent on the still wealthier merchant to dispose of his goods, but by degrees he might become a small master rather than a journeyman, himself employing perhaps an apprentice or a day worker, and this is what we find. By the end of the sixteenth century most of the 'yeomanry' were small masters, not wage-labourers, and had succeeded to

[1] See pp. 132–5.

some extent in securing decent treatment from the wealthy controllers of the company. For the gild had taken on a new form and in the larger towns, and especially in London, had become an incorporated Livery Company. This was a very different thing from the Craft Gild of the thirteenth century. It consisted of the two parts, the Livery and the Yeomanry, and of these the Livery held all the power. It was entirely an oligarchy, ruled by wardens and a court of assistants, each new assistant or warden being chosen not by the general members of the company but by the existing governing body. Only the wealthy could aspire to office, for the expenses were heavy; the rank and file merely paid their dues and got protection when their interests did not happen to clash with those of the Livery. When they did so clash, the worker had no chance, for to combine to improve the conditions of their labour was illegal by an Act of 1548.

Perhaps the men who succeeded in thus securing control to the wealthy only thought they had also secured peace. If so, they were greatly mistaken. Economic forces had by now established such a division of labour that no gild or company stood alone, each was dependent on several others. Thus three crafts went to the making of a knife, the blacksmith's, the cutler's who fitted the handle, and the sheather's, while in the making of cloth each process was a craft in itself. The weaver depended on the spinner, the fuller and dyer on the weaver, and the draper on the fuller. At the same time the order could be reversed and all the others might be said to depend on the draper, who found the final market for the output of the rest. Each craft wanted the controlling position; each was in fact 'engaged in a constant struggle as to which of them should secure the economic advantage of standing between the rest and the market'.[1] But it must be emphasized that this struggle was between two or more sets of capitalists, they all alike excluded from any power the actual craftsman who made the things.

[1] G. Unwin, *Industrial Organization in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. 96.

In the metropolis, owing to the 'custom of London' by which all freemen could work at any trade, the members of the Livery Company often had no connexion with their nominal craft; a member of the Fishmongers' Company might be a printer and yet free from the control of the Stationers' Company since he was not of their membership, while he was a governing member of his own Company, of the business of which he probably knew little or nothing. This custom seriously weakened the industrial element and helped to secure to the merchant class the dominance in every Company. Add to this the growing importance of the port of London as a commercial centre and the result of the contest between the two forms of capital is easily foreseen. In the provinces the industrial capitalist held his own better, with the result that trade concentrated in a few centres such as Bristol and Hull, whose powerful companies of merchants controlled all civic affairs.

Incorporations of Small Masters. Joint-stock Enterprises. Monopolies. But the world was moving fast in the sixteenth century and there was little stability in any economic arrangement. No sooner had the 'yeomanry' become a body of small masters in most skilled trades and the 'domestic system' been started, than these poorer members of the craft found themselves bound by pressure of need to look around for help against the rich manufacturer and merchant. They had secured the help of the government to limit the number of apprentices, whom the richer employers had begun to use as mere cheap labour, leaving skilled workers unemployed, but the Acts were steadily evaded. The big men of the trade were often accused of securing the best raw material and leaving the poor man with rubbish, for which however the merchant exacted full payment at the current price. For nearly 20 years three merchants, only one of whom was connected with the Leathersellers' Company, the other two being stationers by trade, held all the goats' and kids' leather in London. They often cut down the prices paid for piece-work and the small men had to accept them or go without a market for their skill. Attempts to regulate these evils within the

companies having failed, the small masters of the yeomanry began to entertain the idea of withdrawing and trying to gain incorporation separately. Their enterprise was helped by the fact that so many skilled trades were now conducted outside the city walls, and it was here the agitation began. The leather-workers succeeded after 25 years of complaint in getting incorporated as the glovers in 1638, and the feltmakers had taken about the same time to secure their independence in 1604.

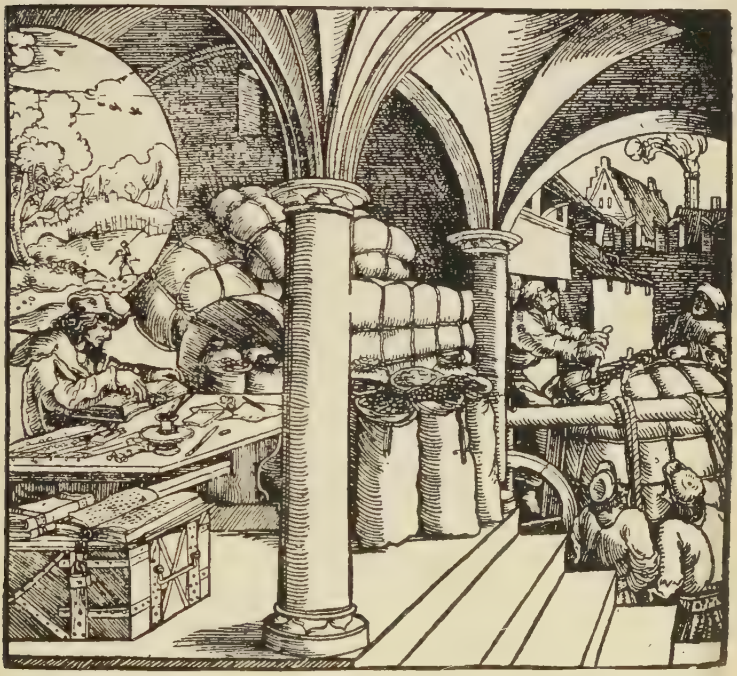
HENRY VIII CONFERRING A CHARTER UPON THE SURGEONS' COMPANY

The story of these last furnishes a good illustration of the course of events. The manufacture of felt hats on a large scale was introduced into England early in the sixteenth century by aliens from the Netherlands and Normandy. Gradually the English craftsmen learnt the new process and in 1576 the feltmakers asked for incorporation in order to regulate the trade. The haberdashers, who sold the hats to the public, claimed that the control was rightly theirs, and were successful in preventing the feltmakers' object. The next effort was to secure the appointment of a government official to control the trade, especially in the raw material, which the feltmakers declared

was often so bad as to be useless but that the haberdashers did not prevent this as they should, because many of them were interested in the supply themselves. They added that while rich feltmakers could force the merchants to sell good wool, the poorer ones were helpless. Constant efforts were made to induce the Haberdashers' Company to do properly the work they claimed the right to do, but always in vain if the law clashed with the members' interest. At last in 1604 the feltmakers obtained not only a charter but also an Act of Parliament, and rumour said the latter cost them £100 in bribery to a member.

In their efforts to protect themselves, the craftsmen had the support of the Government in the early seventeenth century. We shall say more about this in Chapter 4, here it need only be pointed out that the craftsmen regarded Government interference as a boon, and that there is ground for believing that there was a genuine desire on the part of the paternal despotism of the early Stuarts to help the poorer and weaker members of the state. But while all due credit may be given to their motives, their methods were open to serious abuse. The newly formed companies of small masters found themselves lacking in capital sufficient to meet the demands of the new commerce, and here the crown came to their help, directly or indirectly, usually the latter. A courtier with money to invest, a government contractor with the spoils of his last job idle on his hands, or a city merchant with a taste for speculation would offer to supply capital for the organization of the industry provided he and the Company could have exclusive rights. It might be that all he needed was an exclusion of foreign imports, or the suppression of rivals in other districts, but the essential was the elimination of competition. In return he paid the Government a yearly tax on his profits. The craftsmen hoped to benefit by the monopoly and also by the capitalist's power to supervise and order the trade in his and their interest. To the Government it seemed an excellent way of protecting the poor worker and at the same time bringing funds to a very empty treasury. On the other hand the consumer felt himself exploited, and with some justice.

Many of these conversions of incorporated companies into monopolies in the hands of single capitalists failed as speculations, for they depended too much on the exclusion of imported goods. This exclusion could rarely be effected, political and economic forces proved too strong. The most remarkable



A MERCHANT ENGAGED ON HIS ACCOUNTS

instance of this will be described later in dealing with the Cockayne scheme.

Monopolies, however, were not without their justification when they were merely used to introduce or encourage new arts or processes. In these cases they took the place of the modern patent and gave to an inventor the sole use of his invention for a term of years. The man who found the capital to start and

maintain a new or better process was doing public service and was rightly secured against failure for a time. This kind of monopoly injured no existing rights, nor competed with existing industries. But Stuart monopolies were not confined to these two ends, the use of the power of the crown to protect the worker, and the protection of new inventions against undue competition. The scheme was too useful to the Government to stop there, and monopolies of raw material like tin, of flourishing trades such as wine importation, or the manufacture of soap were injurious to worker and consumer alike. For many years the monopolists of pinmaking, working in the supposed interests of the craftsmen, tried to force on the English public badly made English pins in the place of good Dutch ones. This was a typical case, and the general public resented monopolies as a means of cheating the consumer and an encouragement of bad work and adulterated goods. Their abolition by the Long Parliament was the final triumph of a widespread agitation.

Another system of organization also arose out of the desire of the smaller masters to free themselves from the tyranny of those who held the raw material. Attempts were made by some of the incorporated crafts to find capital to buy a stock of raw material to be equally and fairly distributed among themselves. They found it difficult to raise enough within the Company and began to invite outside investors. Already there were models to copy from in the commercial and shipping world, where the joint-stock enterprise was to some extent established. For success in such a venture, besides the help of outside capital, a monopoly was also desirable, and sometimes the workers combined a co-operative venture with a dependence on some monopolist, hoping thereby to avoid the failure that too often attended the attempt of a co-operative enterprise to compete with the wealthy capitalist. The scheme did not work. The monopolist supplier of capital had little interest in maintaining the welfare of the worker and used his power in such a way as to lower and not raise the conditions of labour. The number of apprentices was increased and the cheap labour of women

and children substituted for that of the properly trained and skilled worker.

Women and Children. Something must be said of the position of women and children throughout this period, though there is considerable difficulty in discovering what really happened. In all times of rapid change the weak suffer most, and though we cannot trace the process clearly there is a marked change for the worse in the position of women at least. In the Middle Ages we have noted the definite position allotted in the gild to the widows and daughters of its members. The number of women gild members was much smaller than that of men, but their rights and duties seem to have been the same. By the late seventeenth century women have largely disappeared or remain on with inferior rights. We get an occasional glimpse of the coming change though not sufficient to trace its advent clearly. An attempt by men to capture the candle-making trade of York in 1615 failed, the mayor and aldermen insisting on licensing the women, but in the ordinances of the Berwick Gild in 1505, '11 and '15 the words including daughters as well as sons of freemen are crossed out by some hand of date unknown. In the fifteenth century the 'silkmen' were mainly women, in the seventeenth they seem to be all men. Even from the Brewers'

AN ENGLISH HATTER

We Merchants can doe much, the world well knowes
Our Pompe, our riches by our glorious showes.

Company the women gradually disappeared. Throughout the sixteenth century we get complaints that, in addition to employing more apprentices than they should, the wealthy members 'instructe wenches in their arte'. There was a large increase of unskilled labour in every trade, and women have always been liable to form the cheapest class of this worst exploited section of the industrial world. There are several reasons for this, which may be summed up by saying that women have other sources of income. Thus they add to their other work domestic labour in the home, whether as wife, daughter or mother, and indirectly supplement their outside wage. They earn part of their keep by other means than their trade wage and hence can be beaten down to accept sums below the level of subsistence. Protected by the gild system when in its prime, they were left helpless by the loosening forces of the changing world in a new era when competition, in ever-increasing fierceness, declared the supremacy of might and the survival of the greediest.

The new religion added its quota to the forces relegating them to an inferior position, and there was little hope for women to assert or protect themselves in an age when Milton wrote of Eve and John Knox preached against the monstrous rule of women. Although like the English agricultural labourer the women of the same stiff-necked race did not go under without protest, as the good citizens' wives showed when they stormed the House of Commons in 1642, the process of decay with both began in this period; it was more than two centuries before they reached the lowest level.

Of children in the sixteenth century it is still more difficult to know much. Life for them must have been hard, but it had been hard before; it certainly was to be harder later. There seems, however, to have been a real consciousness in all classes of the importance of children and a genuine care for their welfare, even if combined with a somewhat Spartan notion of the best training for them. But at least men aimed at giving them training, and much energy was spent on carrying out the laws as to apprenticeship, the training of the destitute, and the

establishment through apprenticeship of a real scheme of technical education. We must not blame too much a mistaken ideal of work and hatred of idleness that employed children of three years old on tasks that helped to earn their living. There seems no reason to think that there was deliberate intent to sacrifice the child for the industry, or to wear out little lives in the interest of money making. Men may have been more hypocritical in the sixteenth than in the twentieth century, though there seems no reason to suppose they were, but it would not have been possible then to have claimed openly the right of men and women to

COSTUME: PEASANTRY. Sixteenth century.

build their own fortunes and happiness on the misery and stunted minds of the next generation.

The Changed Outlook. All the changes that have been traced in the last pages show that the outlook of all classes of society was rapidly altering. In the industrial world there was no single event of catastrophic importance such as the revival of the study of Greek proved in the world of thought, the invention of printing in education, or the discovery of America in the realm of commerce. The change came in stages, which, however, arrived swiftly one after the other. Not that the widening of the horizon in the worlds of mind and of physical space was without effect on industry. The sudden expansion of ideas could not leave any class of society utterly untouched. Com-

merce naturally reacted on industry, enterprise in one demanded enterprise in the other. The connexion between the expansion of learning and that of industry would not perhaps appear so obvious, none the less their mutual influence was great. It will be remembered[1] that the Church had always claimed to control every aspect of men's lives and on no point did its voice speak more clearly than in matters of trade and industry. The mediaeval attitude towards usury originated with the Church and for centuries had behind it the whole weight of public opinion. Summed briefly it was this: *A man might only accept profit for the use of his money provided he shared the risk.* But the growth of wealth, and of opportunities for investment, forced the Church into various modifications of this rule, and by the end of the sixteenth century it was whittled down to a mere assertion that oppressive interest exacted from a poor man was unchristian. The success with which men challenged so old-established a morality as the Usury Laws was all part of the movement towards individual judgement, the original impetus of which sprang from the study of those great Greeks who analysed fearlessly all things in heaven and earth. When men dared to assert the right to think for themselves on matters of religion, it was obvious they would also claim the power to judge for themselves in matters of morality. Luther indeed held by the old ideals: son of a peasant, the hatred of the usurer was too deeply written within him for easy effacement, but Calvin's logical mind showed him clearly that it was nonsense to argue that money could not breed since it could buy land or flocks that did. He hesitated to break away entirely from the old restrictions, for he saw what would happen to the poor left at the mercy of the rich, but he drew the line between lawful and unlawful in exaction as between moderation and excess, not between risk and no risk. In this no doubt he voiced the current opinion of the age. Some of the stricter puritans tried to force back the world to the older rules and under Edward VI an attempt was made to prohibit both 'interest' and 'usury',

[1] See Part II, chap. 2, p. 74.

A PRINTING OFFICE OF ABOUT 1600

but most of the Acts of the century aim rather at preventing excessive rates.

The removal of the control of the Church in this matter together with the slackening of gild and municipal regulation justified to some extent the excessive interference of the central government, and, though the merchants might oppose, the general feeling of the more reputable elements of society approved its constant efforts to protect the worker against exploitation by ruthless ' business ' methods.

But if, on the one hand, the industrial and commercial capitalist demanded and obtained more freedom to do as he willed with his own, he by no means wished to relinquish the tradition he had inherited from the Middle Ages of excluding others from his opportunities. Thus the merchants who traded with Spain under James I made bitter complaint of unauthorized rivals who competed with them, shopkeepers who sent out agents or manufacturers who tried to deal directly with the market instead of through the merchants. Worse still they did, anticipating the practice of certain pushing people of modern times, for they sold goods under cost price in order to get rid of inferior stock or to secure a reciprocal trade. For it was worth while to lose a little even on good English cloth, if they could fill their holds in return with wines and oils or, worst of all, that new and outrageous luxury tobacco ! In like wise the Shrewsbury drapers tried to keep their monopoly of finishing the products of the looms of the Welsh villages in their hinterland, and bitterly resented the advent of the agents of the merchant exporter from London. Indeed, in industry as in religion men only asked freedom for themselves, they had no desire to give it to others.

There was, however, a change, an expansion. Just as in the Middle Ages town competed with town and jealously excluded its rivals, so now arose an international competition which became, by the time of James I, a conscious policy. Such sixteenth-century governments as could spare time from wars and religious feuds entered on a policy of encouragement of trade and of regulation of industry which definitely aimed at

the national welfare. The recovery of France under the administration of Henry IV, whose desire to see a fowl in every peasant's pot was a genuine aspiration, seemed to indicate that the true road to prosperity was centralized regulation. Not enough was allowed for the effect of peace and order after centuries of war and lawlessness or for the wonderful natural resources of the French dominions. Whatever the cause, a keen international

SHREWSBURY THE MARKET PLACE.
The Surrounding Buildings are shown as in their original state.

Plan of Market Place

rivalry grew up to establish prosperity and power by means of industrial and commercial success, and the obvious way seemed to be a minute regulation by a paternal government. Experiments under Elizabeth were crystallized under the early Stuarts into a whole-hearted protectionist and mercantilist policy. Monopolies were only one aspect of it, the whole idea was to secure the welfare of England at the expense of her rivals. Every obstacle must be put in the way of trade that supplied work to foreign craftsmen, we must sell more than we bought and even force our inferior goods on reluctant aliens, if necessary

at the point of the sword. Such ideas were universal at the time and none seemed able to see that trade is a mutual game in which, for permanent success, both parties must gain equally.

Aliens. It will be well to inquire how, under the new order of things, aliens fared in this country. The mediaeval objection to 'foreigners', from the next county, was as we have seen breaking down under the new forces of centralized government and national feeling. To a certain extent the objection to aliens was also weakening, though there was no sentiment about the change, merely sound business principles. It began to be recognized that there were certain things that were made better on the Continent than in England and that it would be a good thing to learn these methods. And fortunately for us the misguided rulers of the Continent were at loggerheads with just those classes of their subjects who were most advanced industrially. Philip II successfully crushed freedom and with it prosperity in his own domain of Spain, but the burghers of the Netherlands were of stouter stuff. Under the persecutions of Alva many fled to a kindlier shore and it was well for us that we had a Government far-seeing enough to insist on their reception. Had the desires of some of the less progressive towns prevailed, English industry would never have attained the place it won in the world's history. Our kings' policy of an open door, though it was often due to mere considerations of revenue, was in the long run very profitable to our nation. These refugees came from all parts and settled in many different districts. Walloon weavers settled in Glastonbury and Germans in Austin Friars in London. This happened in the reign of Edward VI and many more came under Elizabeth. It was Cecil's policy to encourage them. Colchester has the honour of being enlightened enough to welcome the strangers, who brought with them the crafts of needle and parchment making, as well as skill in the weaving of fine cloths, known as bays. It was this immigration of aliens that started the manufacture of the 'New Draperies' and revolutionized the whole cloth industry. It is not certain, but seems probable, that our great cotton industry is also a debt

to alien refugees. It had flourished at Antwerp and appears in Manchester just about the time of Antwerp's decline. Brass-making, cutlery, and glass manufacture are also, by tradition, the result of alien instruction.

Another type of alien were the Crypto-Jews from Spain, who fled from the Inquisition during the reign of Elizabeth. These

INDIANS SMOKING. The first printed illustration of the use of the tobacco plant.

were traders, not craftsmen. Their importance lay in their command of money and consequent power to lend to the Government. During the Civil War they helped to finance the Parliamentary party. Anti-Semite agitations failed to oust them either under Cromwell or at the Restoration.

It must not be supposed though that aliens arrived here as they do now and found all trades and industries open to them.

They lived usually in colonies, exercised their arts by special licence and were quite definitely tolerated only because they were useful. The obligation of taking English apprentices was generally imposed on them so that their skill should be gradually diffused through the country. Only slowly were they merged in the general population. Merchants were not so welcome. It was as financiers that the Spanish Jews obtained a footing and foreign merchants were still penalized in many ways. The regular companies would have none of them, so they were confined to the less regulated trade. In 1578 the long agitation against the Hanse privileges ended in their abolition. The Merchant Adventurers had been obliged, owing to the breach with Spain, to remove their head-quarters from Antwerp to Hamburg. The Hanse stood them for ten years and then turned them out. Elizabeth retaliated by abolishing, in 1578, all their privileges in England. They were no longer necessary to the Crown, for English merchants were proving themselves well able to find money for the Government and line their own pockets at the same time.

The debt we owe to alien immigrants is so large that we may stop for a moment to consider how it was that they came here rather than elsewhere. There is no doubt that the chief cause was the fact that England, compared to the Continent, was at peace. A law-abiding man could count on conducting his business without a daily fear of ruin from invading armies. It was far otherwise abroad. Almost every country was torn by civil dissensions, or a powerful despot was trying to impose his religion or his politics on some unwilling small nation. Spain was bullying the Netherlands, in France Huguenots and Catholics were at each other's throats, Italy was the battle ground of every ambitious princeling with a fancy for claiming other people's dominions, while Germany was busy fomenting those political and religious differences among her princes and her towns that left her, in 1648, a desert for a century. It was no wonder that peace-loving burgesses migrated to a more restful atmosphere, where the Government seemed on the whole able to

keep serious unrest from breaking into open rebellion, and where even civil war was not the holocaust it seemed to be elsewhere.

But though the Government welcomed them, as did the wiser of the industrial class, there were certain difficulties in the situation. The rulers were very busy trying to organize the nation on stable lines and these new-comers did not always fit in. They had not fled from French or Spanish Catholicism to accept a compromise called the Anglican Church, into which Elizabeth and her advisers meant to force the bulk of the nation. Again, they might be poor and come on the rates, which a reluctant public was just beginning to pay for the relief of its own destitute ; it had no fancy to add pauper aliens to its charges. Lastly, they were mostly highly skilled artisans, and yet not subject to the rules of the home worker. The last factor was the most difficult to deal with and events like Evil May Day in 1517, when a number of aliens were killed by a mob, were repeated more than once. The usual plan was to organize them in colonies, and though this no doubt delayed their absorption into the nation, it was probably the best plan possible at the time.

Changes in Special Industries. During the period there were changes in certain industries that heralded the revolution of the next century. We have already noted the introduction of the manufacture of the finer kinds of finished cloths, chiefly by alien craftsmen, the beginnings of the cotton and the hardware industries. In connexion with this last was a very great change. The iron fields of the Middle Ages were Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Monmouth, and the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. No successful method had yet been found of smelting iron except by charcoal, and the great forests of the Weald were nearing depletion. Consequently the industry grew in the west, and all the more rapidly that there at hand was coal as well as iron-ore. For although coal was still hardly used for smelting it was used to forge the iron into tools and hardware. Also, since the articles could be made in the same neighbourhood as the pigs of iron, transport was saved. Hence grew up an iron industry that spread up the Severn and through the coalfields of South

Staffordshire to Dudley, Wolverhampton and Birmingham, where it has stayed to this day. It was the first of many industries that were to follow the coalfields.

Summary. 1. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the work of the craftsman became more and more split up between various persons, and two sorts of capitalists appeared, the merchant who concerned himself with selling the made goods and the manufacturer who employed many subordinates and produced on a large scale. These two types were rivals for the control of the whole industry. In London the merchant secured the power, in the provinces the manufacturer.

ANCIENT DRAPERS' HALL

2. The gilds during this period changed fundamentally. The journeymen became unimportant and the yeomanry consisted of small masters working in their homes, dependent on the big men for work and for raw material. In many cases the gild became an incorporated Livery Company with all power in the hands of the wealthy members, the constitution being entirely oligarchic and the governing body recruited by co-option.

3. Attempts on the part of the small masters to get some control over their means of livelihood led to fresh incorporations of new companies consisting of the poorer masters. These found themselves in dire need of capital, and in the effort to supply this arose monopolies and joint-stock enterprises—neither altogether successful and the former leading to serious abuses.

4. By the end of the period the industrial outlook had been revolutionized. Less and less consideration was paid to the general welfare, more and more the individual pursued his own profit, reckless what happened to the 'waste products of industry'. Among these must be classed, as well as the pauper and the vagabond, the unorganized women and, to some extent, the children.

5. The growth of national rivalries caused a concentration of industrial regulation in the hands of the central government, and under the early Stuarts a definite policy of securing national power by industrial and commercial expansion was entered on.

6. The influx of aliens gave an impetus to our industries out of all proportion to their numbers. New crafts were introduced, old ones improved, and the cloth of England at last began to hold its own with the best in the continental markets. The wise foresight of a paternal government in refusing to yield to popular clamour to restrain the immigration was, in this case at least, entirely justified.

3. Overseas Trade and England's Expansion

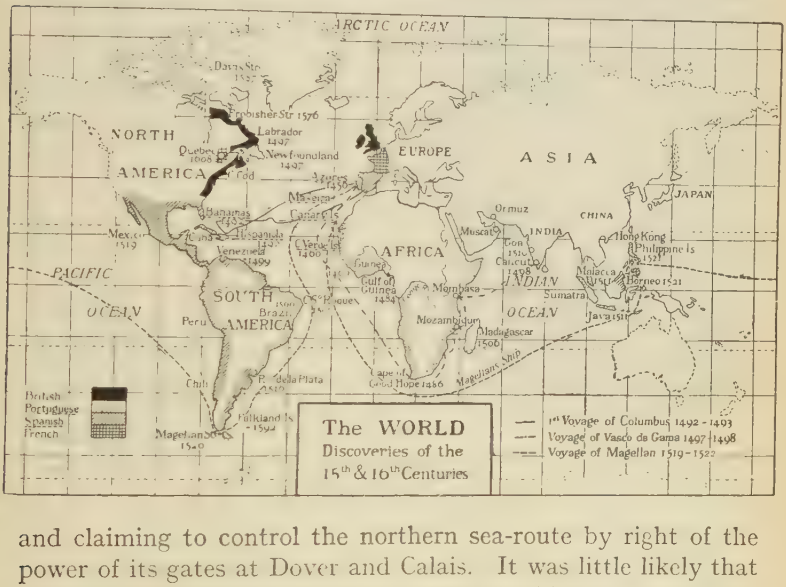
In 1492 a Genoese sailor backed by the Spanish monarchy, thinking to find a new trade route to India, stumbled on a new world. There is no other event in history to compare with it in revolutionary result. The conquest of the air may perhaps prove as great an upheaval, but there is nothing in the past at all like it. For centuries men's minds had dwelt confined in a narrow physical boundary, the space within not all well known it is true, but still an old established tale. Suddenly, within a space of thirty years the size of the world doubled, almost limitless regions opened up for the enterprise of bold and hardy men, few things seemed improbable, nothing impossible. Rumours of lands of amazing fertility, where the little labour needed could be forced from reluctant but helpless savages, new products and promises of mineral wealth, culminated in stories

of gold and silver that made pale the wonders of the fabled east. Year after year came fresh tales of achievement in the teeth of dangers that might well appal, but only seemed to stimulate, the men of the new age. In 1499 Vasco de Gama returned from the first voyage to India round the Cape of Good Hope, and a year earlier Cabot had touched the mainland of America. In little over ten years the Portuguese were establishing themselves in India and the Moluccas, and Spain was making good her

THE WESTERN WORLD as far as it was known at this date.
(Robert Thorne's map, 1527.)

claim to Central America. By 1520 Magellan was finding his way to the Pacific and Cortez was carrying Christianity and the sword to the heart of Mexico, while by 1527 Pizarro had blasted for ever the reputation of his country and his religion in the atrocities of Peru. But the warning as to what expansion might mean was lost in the dazzling glitter of El Dorado and the swelling stream of silver and gold seemed, by 1550, to place Spain on a pinnacle of material wealth and martial glory. In none of this was England sharing. In 1494 the Pope had divided the unknown world near the forty-fourth meridian, giving to

Portugal the east and to Spain the west. French Huguenot pirates alone disputed the monopoly of the two catholic nations. Though a few English merchants, like William Hawkins the elder, ventured to Guinea and Brazil, the majority kept to the old trade with Holland and Spain. But by 1550 the English temper was changing. Throughout the fifteenth century we have seen English merchants forcing their wares in every European port, defying the monopolies of Hansa and Venice alike,



and claiming to control the northern sea-route by right of the power of its gates at Dover and Calais. It was little likely that a monopoly based on a Papal decree would hold them back for long.

There were two possible policies; the new world was large in fact and larger still in imagination, and the English might well find for themselves lands and trade routes as yet unoccupied. A north-east passage to India would balance the Portuguese one by the Cape, settlements in North America might prove as valuable as those farther south. In 1553 Sir John Willoughby failed to find his way through Arctic seas, but none the less the

expedition opened up a trade with Russia, who thus began her career as a European power. The settlements in North America were not to come yet. To the men of the sixteenth century trade was more attractive than colonization, and in ardent Protestants indignation at Papal assumptions was inextricably mixed with a desire to try a fall with a rival nation. Consequently we find the alternative policy of challenging Spain and Portugal's monopoly the more energetically pursued and, for a time, the more successful.

PHILIP II

At first the challenge was confined to the Portuguese possessions on the west coast of Africa. The old tradition of friendship with Burgundy, the power of Spain and the risk to the Netherlands trade if her enmity were roused, proved strong enough to keep English enterprise in check. But in 1562 John Hawkins set out with three small vessels, the largest only 120 tons, to assert the freedom of the seas against the might and prestige of Spain. That his proposed merchandise was negro slaves, bought or kidnapped in Africa to be sold to Spanish colonists in Central America, is quite in keeping with the paradoxes of the age. The slave-trade was fifty years old, and seemed no more evil to Protestant and Bible-reading Hawkins than it did to Catholic priest or missionary. His success was immediate ; he cajoled or bribed Spanish governors to wink at his proceedings and the colonists were only too anxious to trade. Sometimes by a display of force he gave the authorities the excuse of yielding to compulsion, but, however questionable his means, his object was honest trade, and these early stages of the great duel between Spain and England must be distinguished from the later less easily justified doings of Drake and his fellows. Hawkins always

maintained that his proceedings were legitimate, that Spain had no right to a monopoly of trade with its own colonies, and that freedom would mean benefit to both parties. Actually this was true, but as no nation recognized it for another 200 years, least of all England herself, it was not surprising that trade at the cannon's mouth soon led to open war. After the

treacherous murder in 1567, at San Juan de Ulua, English merchants and sailors entered on a period of open aggression, not always quite distinguishable from piracy.

It will be well to consider for a moment whether Philip's commercial policy and his political power to enforce it justified this attitude or even created it. Lord of Spain and the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, with considerable power of interference in North Italy owing to his possession of Milan, he was practically master of the Mediterranean trade; his Burgundian possessions included the great market of Europe, the cities of the Netherlands,

and put in his power the chief vent for English wool and undyed cloth. By his control of the mouth of the river he could block the trade of the Rhine. He seems to have desired to secure for his subjects the control of the trade of Europe, and to have taken measures with this object. His control of the new supplies of gold and silver, at a time when the possession of bullion was considered the determining factor in trade, as it undoubtedly was in war, made his power seem almost impregnable. Against this the English could only set their position commanding the main route between the two principal divisions of his kingdom, but this factor was sufficient to maintain official peace between the two countries for thirty years, in spite of depredations and reprisals that would each one have landed modern nations in immediate war. But when, in 1580, Philip by forceful annexation added the claims of Portugal to his own, it was high time for some one to dispute assumptions that threatened to be world-wide.

Trade Organization in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries. But before we follow farther the doings of the advanced scouts of England's great adventure, it will be well to see what the more sober section of the nation was doing. For the majority of our merchant princes were by no means so ready to risk either themselves or their country on wild-cat schemes, even though Drake himself should lead them and return with millions for himself and his partners. Consistently from first to last Cecil set his face against this policy of Walsingham, Drake, and Hawkins, and Elizabeth herself was far too cool and cautious to venture more than a secret share that might be repudiated at will. The cautious and wealthy citizens of London for the most part preferred slow increase along the old lines of regular and, if possible, monopolist trade. It is wrong, therefore, to think of the sixteenth century merely as a time ' more conveniently spacious ' for ignoring established claims and securing individual desires. It is true that during this period individual interest tended to replace social welfare, but the process was as yet far from complete.

The gild forms of the Middle Ages still persisted, though often with strange modifications. Still the principal method of commercial undertaking was the controlled company. It took two forms, (1) the regulated company, (2) the joint-stock venture. In the REGULATED COMPANY the members traded each with his own capital, submitting to certain by-laws of the society and often under rules limiting quantity and quality of trade. But he took his own risks of capital, though he shared in the general upkeep of agents abroad and organized officials. The nearest analogy to the system at the present day is the Stock Exchange. A JOINT-STOCK enterprise was a different affair. In this several people combined to subscribe the capital, and shared the profits accordingly. Hawkins's and Drake's early ventures were of this kind, and the queen was often secretly a shareholder.

FRANCIS DRAKE

It was not essential that any given company should have a monopoly of trade in the area of its activities, but we find that this was their constant aim, and it will be well to examine the reasons for and against it. The origin of the companies of merchants lay no doubt in the need for mutual protection. Whether their market lay in civilized lands or in semi-savage areas the intruding alien could rely but little on the law to protect him. Unless he could combine in sufficient numbers to secure protection from the monarch or to defend himself by force, he had little chance of pushing his trade. We have already seen how in the Middle Ages attempts were made to fix on his fellow countryman the debts of a defaulting trader, and it was obvious that security could best be obtained by association and

common responsibility. But if a party of merchants, acting as a body, went to the expense and trouble of setting up agents, enforcing regulations, and protecting each other in foreign places, it seemed just that others should not step in and secure all these advantages without paying dues and sharing the burden. Consequently the members claimed that they alone should be allowed to carry on the particular trade. There was no great objection to this from merchants, provided that entrance was open and easy for all, but there was a strong tendency to make membership difficult and to secure for the few a monopoly by which they could hold the consumer to ransom. We find the cloth trade complaining that the merchant adventurers would not buy their cloth in sufficient quantities or only at low prices, in the one case thereby keeping up prices, in the other increasing their profits. The clothiers, in turn, to save themselves, either adulterated their wares or cut down wages. The joint-stock venture was in essence exclusive ; when it extended to an entire district, as in the case of the East India Company, it became a close monopoly. No one could join unless an existing member were willing to sell his share. Such joint-stock companies, holding monopolies, are seen in modern times in railways, gas and water undertakings, and similar enterprises. In the sixteenth century, though there was considerable opposition, the regulation of trade was regarded as essential and the most reformers asked for was that regulated companies should have low entrance fees and should abstain from making 'corners' or 'rings' against the consumer.

We have already traced the rise of the chief of these companies, the MERCHANT ADVENTURERS. During the sixteenth century it controlled a large part of the trade of the country. In 1494 it had removed its head-quarters from Bruges to Antwerp, where it sold English cloth and bought German hardware that had come down the Rhine. Its presence contributed largely to the development of Antwerp, not only commercially but industrially, for the English undyed cloth was finished there by native artisans. In 1564 the Company was incorporated. Its members

were English merchants trading to certain specified parts. Care was taken to prevent their alienation; they could not marry an alien nor hold property abroad. Entrance was by apprenticeship (eight years), patrimony, or a heavy entrance fee. Many of its members were younger sons of the nobility. It had very great political and social influence, for it often financed the Crown, and under the astute guidance of Gresham held up the Spanish Armada for a year by delaying payment of Spanish bills drawn on the Bank of Genoa and so turning credit against Spain in the Netherlands. In the Civil War it found money for the Parliament. The king often used its governor or some important member as his representative abroad. It kept the seat of its government on the Continent, and its Governor and Court of Assistants controlled the local branches in other towns. Antwerp did not remain their centre. Expelled thence they withdrew to Emden and Hamburg and kept their German trade in spite of all Philip's efforts to oust them. During the seventeenth century their privileges were constantly attacked, and eventually their exclusiveness was modified.

GERMAN PEWTERERS

But though the Merchant Adventurers controlled the trade of the Rhine and the Elbe, there were regions further afield worth exploiting. In 1579 the EASTLAND COMPANY was chartered to develop the Baltic trade. Hither they brought English

finished cloth and came back with tar, hemp, cordage, and all kinds of naval stores, besides timber which was needed owing to the approaching exhaustion of the English forests. They did not hold a monopoly and, though at first successful, were eventually ousted by the Dutch, who secured the Baltic corn trade and with it the rest.

In 1555 a company was chartered with a monopoly of trade with Russia. Sebastian Cabot was its first governor, and later it was known as the Muscovy Company. Its power was in the hands of about fifteen members, and it had the high entrance fee of £60. It secured considerable privileges from Ivan the Terrible, and held the monopoly of the trade to Russia, Armenia, Media, the ancient Hyrcania, Persia, and the Caspian. It obtained Parliamentary sanction in 1556, with reservations as to Norway fisheries and certain merchants of York, Hull, Newcastle, and Boston. Commerce was to be exclusively in English ships with a majority of English sailors, and undressed cloths were not to be exported. Its exclusiveness called into existence numerous 'interlopers', who allied themselves with the Dutch and eventually ruined the company. The Dutch traded freely, and while the English company spent its energies trying to keep interlopers out and prices up, their astute neighbours secured not only the Russian trade but the whole fisheries of the north. By 1654 the total number of members had sunk from 207 to 55 and in 1697 its entrance fee was reduced to £5, and its monopoly practically ceased.

The Turkey or Levant Company originated in 1581 with a seven years' monopoly of the trade. It exported English cloth and brought back raw silk, drugs, and general Eastern produce. It was never greatly prosperous, it competed with the French and Venetians, and in its principal import of raw silk was eventually supplanted by the East India Company. Its policy of trying to secure all the trade for the London members helped its competitors. It remained, however, in existence till 1753.

The organization with the most remarkable history is the East India Company. Founded in 1600 as a regulated company,

it held from the first a close monopoly and every voyage was a joint-stock enterprise, though not all members joined in each voyage. In 1612 a joint stock was created for the whole company, at first for a limited number of years. It was ruled by a governor and twenty-four assistants, and alone might trade with all islands and ports of Asia, Africa, and America from Cape of Good Hope to Magellan. It also held a licence to export bullion. Such a venture was a challenge to the Portuguese, who had settled in Goa in India since 1497, and to the Dutch, who claimed sole trade with the Spice Islands or Eastern Archipelago. In India the English Company throve and during the seventeenth century founded factories at Surat, Madras, Hooghly near Calcutta, and Bombay. It secured privileges in Persia and even for ten years in Japan. But the Dutch put up a much more formidable opposition. Thorold Rogers has said 'More blood has been spilt over cloves than over some dynasties. More unforgiven injuries have been committed to secure a monopoly of this spice than over anything, except the monopoly of religious dogmas.' This may not be literally true, but the career of the East India Company was a stormy one from the beginning. In 1623 the Dutch did not stick at murder to drive the English from Amboyna and the neighbouring isles, and so fiercely did they fight the encroaching aliens that eventually they drove them completely from the islands. Besides the Dutch, the English Company had to face the usual trouble of 'interlopers' and often these were licensees of the Crown. At the end of the

SEBASTIAN CABOT

seventeenth century there was much opposition to its monopoly, but in 1702 it was re-organized under Parliamentary sanction, a step very necessary since the Company had in many places assumed territorial sovereignty.

The controversy over the East Indian monopoly throws considerable light on the commercial ideas and practices of the age. It was attacked chiefly on the following grounds :

(1) That, since there was little market for English goods in the Far East, the merchants had to export bullion. According to the ideas of the time this tended to affect the balance of trade unfavourably for the home country.

(2) That the distance and danger of the voyages tended to keep ships and sailors away that might be needed for national defence.

(3) That it took away capital that would be better employed on the internal development of the country, e. g. on roads and the draining of marshes.

(4) That it only brought luxuries and supplied no raw material for English industries. (Silk could be got from the Levant.) The chief imports were spices and drugs, with saltpetre for ordnance.

(5) That its close monopoly and joint-stock enterprises put the power into the hands of a few men, who could and did fix prices to suit themselves without any consideration for the general public.

To these charges the defenders of the Company replied :

(1) That much of the bullion was recovered when they sold the Eastern produce to other nations, while there was some sale of English goods in the East so that the imports were not entirely paid for in gold and silver.

(2) That though it used ships and sailors, it thereby encouraged all maritime trades.

(3) That joint-stock enterprise was the only possible one in a trade demanding so much capital, that this method gave opportunity for investment to others who were not merchants, and that raw silk was cheaper brought by sea than by the overland route. These last three arguments were true. In 1617

a joint-stock subscription of over a million and a half sterling was put up by nearly 1,000 persons, including 15 peers and 13 peeresses, 82 knights, 18 widows and spinsters, 26 clergy and physicians, besides merchants and tradesmen.

The objection that loomed largest in the minds of the economists was the exporting of gold and silver, and the desire to avoid this led to the efforts to discover a north-west passage round North America and so a market for English goods in China. With the money obtained for these traders could go on and buy the spices and drugs of India.

Such were the principal trading companies founded before 1650, and theoretically at least they pretty well absorbed the trade routes of the world. But the monopoly was by no means as complete as it sounds. 'Interlopers' were everywhere and often whole groups of merchants secured independence from the orthodox companies. The merchants of Hull and Newcastle were free of the control of the Muscovy Company; the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle and Exeter claimed to be separate from the general body and not amenable to their rules; Crown nominees held special licences of all kinds. In theory, only the French was open to all; practically, not a district or route was without its free-lances. Still no one in the seventeenth century desired unregulated trade, for in their eyes such freedom meant disorder and the influx of 'disorderly and unskilled' persons. What the reformers desired was regulated companies with a low admission fee, easily accessible to all. Joint stock they objected to, as placing all the power in the hands of a few large holders and thereby crushing initiative and enterprise. Regulation was probably necessary in the actual condition of law and order for trade to hold its own, but at the same time it probably held back enterprise and the pushing of new markets. It threw the power into the hands of the older and more established merchants, who took less risks, clung to old policies, and generally put extinguishers on youthful exuberance and adventure.

Colonial Expansion. England, the greatest colonizing nation since the Greeks, came late into the field. Not till the seven-

teenth century do we find her turning her mind overseas, a century nearly behind the pioneers. In 1603 she had no established foothold in Asia, Africa, or America. Attempts to plant Virginia had failed, and the only overseas interest she possessed was a small one in the fisheries of Newfoundland. In Ireland alone had she tried the new path, a bloodstained entry that we would fain forget. In few places perhaps was her road to empire other than over the liberties of weaker races, but only in Ireland was it built on wholesale massacre.

The following dates of the foundation of our principal colonies will give an idea of the work done in the seventeenth century. Even then the stories of two of the five nations do not begin till the eighteenth.

Newfoundland, 1583.
Barbadoes and Bermudas, 1605–14.
Virginia, 1607.
New England and Nova Scotia, 1620–1.
Guiana, 1627.
Antigua, Trinidad and Bahamas, 1627–30.
Carolina, 1629.
Maryland, 1632.
Long Island, 1635.
Jamaica, 1655.
New York, 1664.
Hudson's Bay, 1670.
Pennsylvania, 1682.

Trading factories in :—

Gambia, 1630.
Gold Coast, 1660.
Lagos, 1661.
St. Helena, 1651.
Surat, 1609.
Madras, 1639.
Hooghly, 1650.
Bombay, 1665.

What were the causes of this movement of our people to lands beyond the sea? They may be divided between political, religious, and economic forces. Of these, the first played the least part, except in Ireland, where it predominated and where the movement was a terrible failure.

1. The Political. The Government gave its support to

enterprises of colonization in America, largely as a possible check on Spanish ideas of world power. In Ireland it made a deliberate attempt to anglicize the laws, speech, and civilization of the native Irish, by dispersing throughout the land English colonists, who were to impose English speech and ways by degrees on all the inhabitants.

2. The Religious. The rivalry with Spain was due to religious as well as commercial and political forces. Nothing is more amazing than to read the sayings and writings of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century statesmen, soldiers, sailors, and merchants. Their minds were full of a strange jumble of commerce and religion, of genuinely religious motives at the back of horrible, even of dastardly deeds. They were fully convinced that every effort, however dubious in method, to crush the Spaniards, those 'children of the Devil', must be pleasing to God. We shall misinterpret two centuries of English history, if we fail to realize that on both sides, Catholic and Protestant, the strife was a new Crusade. The men who founded Virginia hoped not only for commercial results, they desired that it should 'hereafter tend to the Glory of his Divine Majesty, in propagating of Christian religion to such people as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true knowledge and Worship of God'. We wrong them and mistake the age, if we read such a declaration with an incredulous smile. The sixteenth is not the only century in which men have believed that they could at once serve both God and Mammon.

The same factor played its part too in another way. Several settlements owed their origin to religious refugees. The story of New England is well known; Maryland was founded in 1632 and became a refuge for Roman Catholics; Rhode Island and Pennsylvania (the latter founded by Quakers) were the result of efforts after still greater freedom.

3. The Economic. These were mostly commercial. English traders encouraged the settlement of land which would produce products not so easily obtainable in European markets. Consequently in the southern parts of North America and in the

West Indies we find large tobacco and sugar estates worked by negro labour. Far from being self-supporting communities, they were largely dependent on the ships for necessities. The advantages to England were, that she thereby obtained things which otherwise must come from foreign nations, and so helped to keep the 'balance of trade' in her own favour; that it encouraged shipbuilding, attempts being made to force all the trade into English ships; lastly, the colonies provided markets for English goods. Emigration to take up homesteads was, however, not unknown and the northern states were settled in this way, often, as we have seen, by discontented religious or political rebels.

The early seventeenth century saw much unemployment; it was estimated to be as high as 30 per cent. in Sheffield in 1615, and emigration of labourers to some extent eased the situation. The colonies were used too as dumping ground for prisoners and undesirables generally, in spite of protests from the colonists. Criminals, prisoners of war, and inconvenient Irish were thus got rid of. Royalist prisoners after Worcester shared the fate with 2,000 Irish girls and boys deported by order of the Government. Kidnapping was not uncommon. Such emigrants were sold by auction, but they retained some legal rights. After five years' service they were free and might take up land. In Virginia their lot was not intolerable; in the West Indies it was very bad.

The government of these new lands underwent considerable change. The original grant of land was made to a company or a wealthy proprietor, who was responsible for all who went. But some form of self-government quickly arose, the colonists usually modelling themselves on what they had known in England, the Virginian large estates taking on a semi-feudal complexion, the small closely set holdings of the north becoming democratic townships.

The Crown found it difficult to control the companies, and the colonies managed their own affairs, subject to veto by the home Government. The chief cause of interference was its navigation policy. Charles I tried to make all colonial trade pass through English ports. This pressed heavily on Virginia and the West

Indies, much of whose trade was with the Dutch. The stubborn New England stock ignored the order, and few governors cared to enforce it. As their foreign trade was small, England did not greatly trouble. The owners of the Newfoundland fisheries were allowed to trade direct with the Mediterranean.

The wrongheadedness of our early ideas of colonization reached its highest pitch in Ireland. In newer lands the difficulties were less, since there was only a scanty and uncivilized population to displace. But in Ireland, before anything could be done, it was necessary to get room to do it, and the land was already occupied by a nation possessed of an alien culture, speech and law, who were strong enough to fight but not to fight successfully. Tired of exercising a merely nominal authority over a people who steadily refused to see the superiority of English law or English religion, the Tudor monarchs conceived the idea of anglicizing the Irish by means of English planters. Attempts were made in Munster and elsewhere by grants of land to individuals, who organized their estates on the lines of English manors and who regarded the Irish sept and its land tenure, its inheritance by gavelkind as a sort of moral disease. Tyrone's rebellion gave an opening for a more ambitious attempt, and a London company was chartered in 1613 to plant Ulster with military colonies. It was not very successful, for London speculators cared only to secure the best rents and so preferred Irish graziers to English and Scotch agriculturists. Above all, no provision had been made to dispose of the remnant of soldiery, and rebels who had escaped the massacres, which, though they spared neither man, woman, nor child, had still left a number of despairing and reckless outlaws. Whatever success the scheme achieved was blotted out by the revolt of 1641 and the re-conquest by Cromwell. Determined this time to do the business thoroughly, he set out to clear the land of all, English and Irish alike, whose loyalty to the new English régime was doubtful. All were ordered to move west of the Shannon, even the purely English citizens of Waterford and Kilkenny. Thousands were transported to the West Indies. But, like others, the Dictator found it was easy

to make a desert and call it peace, not so easy to replant that desert. Veteran soldiers, mostly of the trading class, did not make good agricultural colonists, and though many of the dispossessed Irish crept back to their homes as mere labourers, the claims of Cromwell's settlers blocked the way to any fresh settlement. The events of 1689 completed the chaos. The penal laws against the Catholics put every Romanist proprietor

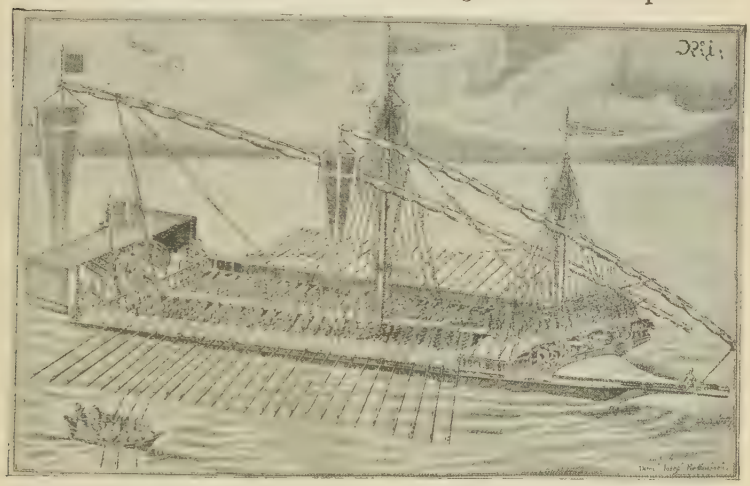
A MERCHANTMAN of the year 1519.

at the mercy of informers, and the English terror of a prosperous Ireland, that might prove again a source of power to the Crown against the English people, caused them to nip in the bud every Irish effort at industrial development. It was a fatal policy; it drove Irish enterprise and Irish wool overseas to France, and the result of this proved more hurtful to English trade than anything that Ireland of herself could have done. The attempt to anglicize a subject race had failed, but it left the legacy of an English garrison, an object of hatred to the mass of the people.

The disaster of Ireland might have been repeated in the new world, but for the 3,000 miles of water that rolled between, the home colonial policy continued to be of the most selfish kind,

determined solely by the interests of the home trader. It took us nearly two centuries to learn the real use and value of a colonial empire.

The Mercantile Marine and the Navy. Throughout the Middle Ages England had no navy. Ships were only used to transport troops, and when an Edward or a Henry wished to invade France he merely commandeered enough merchant ships for his



A GALLEY

purpose. These ships, indeed, were little suited to fighting. Since the days of the Phoenicians there had been two classes of vessels, the long ship and the round ship, for fighting and for trade. Even the Norseman had his long ship, but he was the only warrior who had dared in it the high seas. Mediaeval naval battles were fought in the inland waters of the Mediterranean in long narrow galleys, their length seven times their breadth, rowed by some fifty oars, decked almost flush with the water, whose main tactical weapon was the ram. They fought, in fact, a land battle on the sea. Their chief advantage was their mobility, their great drawback the very short time they could stay at sea. They were crowded with men and had little room for provisions or arms.

Such ships were totally unable to stand Atlantic weather. Again, for trade in the outer seas, the ordinary round ship, with length only twice its breadth, was too clumsy in manœuvring to defend itself against hordes of pirates. The Italians, for their northern trade, had developed an intermediate type between galley and round ship. Its length was three times its breadth ; it had less free-board than the ordinary merchant vessel, having

THE HENRY GRACE A DIEU

at first high erections fore and aft, later two complete decks. It started with auxiliary oars, but eventually trusted to sails alone. It was known as the merchant-galleasse, and carried all the Venetian trade with London and Antwerp. It was not used by the Spanish for their ocean trade till the seventeenth century. Henry VIII saw the possibilities of this type for war vessels. The first was the ' Great Galley ', having both oars and sails, but the oars were soon dropped. If the year 1545 be considered the birth year of English naval power, the credit is due

to Henry. By this date he had four classes of ships, great ships, galleasses, pinnaces (originally oared vessels, later small sailing ships, with length four times their width, used for scouting and messages), and finally row-barges, an invention of Henry's own.

The next fifty years was a time of experiment, and the controversies over oars versus sails, large versus small ships, were long and heated. The second point was not settled till after the

A GALLEON

defeat of the Armada, but before that date the conception of the warship as a gun platform was gaining acceptance. Gunnery was the forte of English seamen, and before the war with Spain broke out, England was recognized as the first naval power in the open seas. It was the vast resources of the Spanish monarch and the reputation of the Spanish infantry that England feared; there was no doubt as to her own superiority in seamanship and gunnery. In numbers and tonnage, too, the English navy that met it was little inferior to the great Armada, while its mobility

and trick of using its guns without boarding paralysed the Spanish tactics, based as they were on the grappling traditions of the galley.

The English naval ship that emerged from the struggle with Spain was a vessel of some 500 to 600 tons, with low freeboard, flush decks, and not very high tops. It could be handled quickly, could get alongside a large ship, pour a broadside below her waterline, and be off before the enemy could grapple. These smaller ships were not quite so roomy as the older type, but were more comfortable and owing to their lower tops rolled less.

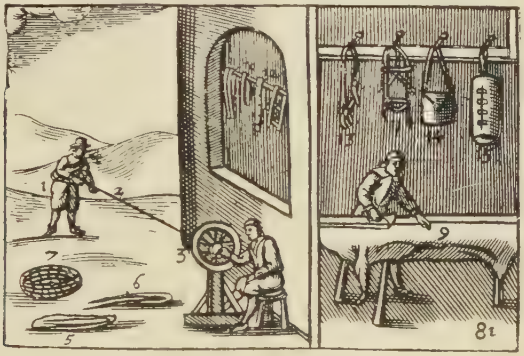
The pay of naval seamen was 6*s.* 8*d.* and later 10*s.* a month with kit, rations, and loot. Privateering paid better, and the naval service was not popular, especially as during the seventeenth century it was, for the most part, neglected and starved. Recruitment was by a sort of conscription among the seafaring population. There were no slaves however, galleys when used being rowed by freemen.

This sketch of the navy has been included for two reasons: (1) that a sea-trading power is always forced to protect its trade by some means, and the cost of doing so may really be regarded as a first charge on its commerce; (2) because the growth of our navy is so intimately connected with that of the mercantile marine. Even in the twentieth century the English navy has drawn on the ships of commerce to an extent quite unforeseen; in the sixteenth the distinction between the two was never very clear. When not wanted for war the queen's ships were used to earn their keep in commerce and the *Minion* and the *Jesus of Lubeck* were lent to Hawkins and others, while in the crisis of war every merchant-vessel was at the disposal of the Government. The war-galleon had developed out of the merchant-galleasse, and, whether its primary object was war or trade, every ship carried guns and used them.

Variety and Extent of our Trade. A sixteenth-century document,[1] that still exists, gives some idea of the multiplicity of articles in which a merchant of that day traded. It is the report

[1] *State Papers, Domestic, Eliz.*, vol. 255, no. 56, Record Office.

of some leading merchant, probably of Bristol or Exeter, to a State minister, perhaps Walsingham, on the trade with a number of foreign ports. The English exports include cloth, cottons, flannel, linen, ordnance, knives, scissors and shears, bell-metal, pins and small wares; foods such as wheat, butter, cheese, biscuit (for the Newfoundland fishermen), salt, pilchards (to Italy then as now), beer and 'adulterated wines' (these last to Russia). Of minerals we exported lead and tin, and among other items wax, tallow, ropes, oak and looking-glasses. The imported goods were still more numerous. Of raw materials



ROPER AND CORDWAINER

we find iron, flax, hemp, tallow, wax, silk, saltpetre, fine skins, green woad, pitch, rosin and hops. Fruits such as oranges and lemons, raisins, currants, muscatels and dates, nuts and 'great onions twelve or thirteen inches about', with wines of all kinds figure in the list. Timber, various oils, sugar, molasses, cochineal, indigo, sumach, lickerishe, log-wood, feathers, soap from Seville, 'spices and wares from the East Indies' appear, besides such manufactured things as cables, rope, linen, canvas, porcelains, carpets, cross-bows, sword-blades and articles in brass and copper.

Such a list argues a very extensive trade and no small amount of luxury at home. The author's directions as to the necessity of only sending the finest cloths and linens to Spain and the

Levant throw light on the development that was taking place in English textiles. Still more illuminating are his warnings as to the precautions necessary to guard against both force and guile. Of Galicia he remarks, 'Here you must take heed that you gree with the customers for your customs, before you land your wares, for they will gree with you for two in the hundert. Otherwyse they will make you paye eight or ten in the hundert.' Of Nerve, Riga, and Revell, 'Here take hede you trust none of the countrye without payinge reddy moneye, for they are a very false people'; of the islands of Scotland and the north of Ireland, 'But you must take hede of the people, because they are false and full of trechery. Therefore you must keep good watch at night and be upon your own kepinge.' A gun-running trade with Barbary seems to have existed, 'but if the Spanyerdes take you trading with them, you dye for it'. From Bilbao to Bordeaux must have been a somewhat exciting trip, for 'From hence we convey all our moneys, both silver and gold, into France for the lading of our ships in Bordeaux, for the which we run great and dangerous adventures'. Indeed the Bay of Biscay seems to have offered more dangers than its storms provide, for of Rochelle he reports, 'And divers other kind of merchandise, for all the pirates of France do discharge here. You shall have many things of the Indies of Portingal better cheap than in Portingal, but you must take heed you go thither in a good ship or else you are like to be robbed by the way, either outwards or homewards.'

Summary. 1. In the race to take possession of the New World, either by commerce or by colonization, England started late. Spain and Portugal had in theory divided the earth between them, and in practice had occupied what seemed then the most desirable portions. From the middle of the sixteenth century England set out to challenge this monopoly, for the first fifty years in trade only, during the seventeenth century in colonization as well.

2. All English trade during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was in theory regulated and controlled, much of it was

actually so in practice. The regulated or the joint-stock company occupied most of the fields. The tendency to monopoly shown by both these forms of control brought out considerable opposition, but the object was freer access to the regulated company rather than general free trade. The great companies mostly survived into the eighteenth century, the East India into the middle of the nineteenth.

3. England began her colonial career in the seventeenth century, during which time the foundations of the United States, the English West Indies and British India were laid. Attempts to colonize Ireland failed.

4. The age of the Tudors saw the birth of the English Navy, and a revolution of the art of sea-warfare. Out of the old merchant ship was evolved a new type of warship, which replaced the war-galley of the Middle Ages, and English seamen first taught the world that sea-power depended on seamanship and gunnery. The connexion between the navy and the mercantile marine remained close, but from this time onwards there was always maintained a nucleus of state warships. The failure of the Spanish attempt to land an invading army had proved that England's safety lay in her wooden walls.

4. Government Policies, 1500–1660

In this chapter we shall gather together the various economic problems of the Tudor and Stuart governments and see how they tried to meet them.

Enclosures. The first of these with which the early Tudors were faced was the agrarian. We have seen how the new policy of the landlords of enclosing large areas for sheep-farming tended to depopulate the country and create unemployment. It was impossible for Tudor kings to ignore these disasters, even though they affected only the poor. There were several reasons for this :

(*a*) Such a disturbance of the customary stability of immemorial things produced violent unrest and constant disorders.

Tudor monarchs occupied a throne which had a considerable tendency to rock; claimants for the unstable position were many, and at any moment one of them might turn agrarian discontent into political adventure. The dispossessed were of the class that formed the backbone of English armies and were quite equal to the mercenaries that might be sent against them. Obviously it was best, if possible, to prevent the discontent.

(*b*) The shire levies were the source of England's man-power in time of war. The replacement of sturdy farmers and their sons by thousands of sheep threatened to make recruiting impossible. If the tradition of the English foot-soldier, won at Crécy, was to be maintained he must come from something better than the rogue and vagabond class. The maintenance, therefore, of a substantial peasantry was essential.

(*c*) Financially, too, the farming class was the backbone of the country. Subsidies and fifteenths were levied partly on the rent of land, partly on property and household goods. The disappearance of the substantial peasant farmer lessened the amount of taxable property, and, though the landlord might increase his rents and so pay more tax on them, the increase in tax so gained was not equal to the loss by the destruction of property. Especially was this so since the assessment of property was much nearer its real value than that of rents, many of the latter being returned at less than a tenth of their true amount.

For these reasons it was necessary for the government to take steps to prevent a too swift change in the system of land tenure and the administration of landed property. Let us now inquire what were the measures taken. First of all we find all through our period a series of statutes against enclosures and consequent depopulation. Except for a period of four years from 1549–53, when power was in the hands of the great landlords, who used it shamelessly in their own interests, the government saw that the law of the land should be against the unscrupulous innovator. All the statutes are very alike, all aim at maintaining a fixed portion of the land as arable. Typical clauses are :

(*a*) Pasture formerly under the plough to be re-converted;

(*b*) Destroyed farm buildings to be rebuilt;

(*c*) The number of sheep owned by one man to be limited to 2,000;

(*d*) Fines to be imposed for converting tillage to pasture contrary to the Act;

(*e*) Cottages not to be built with less than four acres of land attached.

These statutes are evidence of good intention, but even in the twentieth century it is one thing to pass an Act of Parliament, another to get it carried out. The only machinery available for this consisted of the very powerful and extensive local government, which was controlled by the great magnates, and these were the very offenders to curb whom the Acts were passed. If something more effective than this could not be found, the Acts were likely to prove a dead letter. Consequently Commissions were appointed to investigate and enforce the statutes. Wolsey in 1517 started an active campaign of this kind, the same policy was continued by Thomas Cromwell, and throughout the rest of Henry VIII's reign we find the central government intervening to protect individual tenants from dispossession. Somerset went further and tried to put the clock back once for all by preventing all changes in the cultivation of an estate. He appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into offences against the anti-enclosure Acts, with power to pull down fences and restore decayed farms. Faced by the opposition of the great lords, the Commissioners failed, and Somerset's policy of pardoning rioters who took the law into their own hands soon brought about his downfall. His vacillation in dealing with the rebellion of Ket, who assembled 16,000 in a camp outside Norwich and assumed control of the district for five months, was due to his sympathy with rebels who were turning the tables on tyrannous landlords. Like most Tudor rebellions it was well organized, and the Protector would have done better had he definitely taken a side, either redressed grievances or, as Warwick eventually did, crushed the complainants by force.

The government of unscrupulous landlords, which succeeded

Somerset, set out to crush all resistance to the new order, and forbade by law meetings of the peasants for purposes of combined action. In the hands of interested justices this became a convenient weapon to prevent strikes and unions as well as riot and destruction of property.

With the restoration of the power of the Crown the policy of preventing too tyrannous an application of change was con-

COTTAGES IN WEST HAGBOURNE, BERKSHIRE

tinued. Other Commissions, with similar powers to that of Somerset, were appointed in 1607 and throughout the period 1630–36 ; they no doubt effected something, at least spasmodically. Later we shall consider the machinery of the Privy Council, which was the Tudor device for securing that local magnates did their duty. At its instance, with the help of the Courts of Equity, more protection than Common Law provided was given to the copyholder and tenant by lease. We cannot say that the government prevented the continuance of enclosures, it is not certain that it meant to, but it did act as a drag on the wheel

and so lessened the distress inevitable in swiftly changing conditions of life and labour.

Corn Policy of the Government. If the government took on itself to insist on men growing corn instead of sheep, it was reasonable to expect that it should also arrange that corn should pay a fair profit, and from 1534 onwards Acts appeared on the

TIMBER FRAMEWORK OF WATTLE-AND-DAUB BUILDING

statute book which aimed at ensuring a minimum price to the farmer. The principle common to them all was that, if the price of corn sank below a certain level, the surplus might be exported. The price fixed rose from 6*s.* 8*d.* in 1500 to 10*s.* in 1563 and 20*s.* in 1593 for a quarter of wheat. Such a plan aimed at preventing unnecessary increase of prices due to the export of food needed by the country, and at the same time prevented a plentiful harvest so lowering prices as to make corn-growing altogether a losing game. It has been claimed that this policy of 'pro-

tecting' the farmer was so successful that corn-growing became more profitable than sheep-rearing because of it, and so the enclosure question in its worst aspect solved itself. It is probable that security from loss did induce the farmer and landowner to keep more land in tillage, but as a matter of fact the prices fixed were so low that only in ten years between 1514 and 1600 did the market sink below them. Consequently the protection of the farmer was practically not needed. That the farmer would have liked much greater protection is certain, but there were two elements in the nation more important in Tudor eyes than the farmer: the first was the ever-growing population of London, clamouring to be fed; the second, the very poor, who, if food was too dear, would provoke riot and disorder. For both these low prices were desirable, hence the exportation of grain was strictly controlled. It did, however, take place under licences, of which there were more perhaps than was desirable, but they were a source of considerable revenue to the Crown. There was one strict prohibition, the export of corn to enemy countries. Elizabeth and her advisers thoroughly understood that economic weapons were as useful as steel and powder, and though Spain had much silver and gold it was deficient in natural and industrial products. So while Drake seized Spanish galleons and Elizabeth herself detained weatherbound treasure ships, she also saw to it that supplies of raw material should not go from England to her enemies.

The internal trade in corn was closely watched and controlled by the government. The 'Book of Orders' contains regulations more minute than even the Great European War could force on us in the twentieth century. In every district men had to report the exact quantities of corn they held, to put a certain amount on the market first for the benefit of the poor before the 'corn bodgers' or middlemen might buy large quantities. Only the surplus might be sent out of the district, though special licences for transfer were made in the interest of London. Through the Clerks of the Markets, who were royal officials, not local dignitaries, the central government kept itself well informed,

and licences of all kinds were issued with a view to equalizing the price all over the country. Drastic interference was constant. Malting was often prohibited, especially of barley, and grain fit for human food was not allowed to be fed to dogs or pigs. It was all most paternal, and no doubt did something to ease the distress of the very poor, but its success depended on securing honest officials, very rarely to be found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Maintained by the strong hand of Elizabeth's government, it sank into disuse under the incompetence of the Stuarts.

Government Control of Industry. The development of industry from an affair of the towns to an affair of nations was naturally followed by an attempt at national instead of municipal regulation. Nothing was further from any one's idea than that it should be left to the uncontrolled forces of competition. Quite early in the century the state began to recognize that industry was rapidly outgrowing the capacity of local control. The sanction of gild ordinances had already passed out of the hands of the mayor to those of the Justices of the Peace, in 1503 it was transferred to the Lord Chancellor and the Justices of Assize. Districts were no longer self-contained, they were dependent on each other, and regulation must proceed from some power outside them all. Having assumed control, the central government had to decide between conflicting interests. Should it help the old corporate towns to prevent the spread of manufacture to the country districts, or leave the enterprising capitalist to exploit the peasant and crush out the gild members by the use of cheap unorganized labour? Should it, again, stand by the wealthy capitalist and, on mercantile principles, seek national wealth and power at the expense of the poorer citizens, or should it throw its weight on the side of the weak and support the labourer and the craftsman against his overbearing master?

The first of these questions it answered by a consistent support of the corporate town and the regularized gild against the free-lance capitalist and his cheap country labour. In 1523 an Act was passed compelling worsteds manufactured in the country

round Norwich to be finished and dyed within the town. In 1555 the Weaver's Act limited the country weaver to one loom and to two apprentices, and forbade any one to set up as a clothier except in a town or a place where there was already a cloth manufacture of ten years' standing. As in agriculture, so in industry, Tudor sovereigns acted as brakes on a too rapid development of competitive capitalism.

The answer of the central government to the second question is not so easily determined. In so far as a contented working class was necessary to that ideal of peace and order, which was so clearly before Tudor monarchs, in so far, but no farther, the government tried to protect the weaker members of the nation. But it was very definitely with the idea of keeping things as they were, with prevention of the grosser abuses. Any attempt to raise the standard of living of the class as a whole was effectively prevented, by still leaving the employing class in control. Justices of the Peace and mayors and aldermen who fixed wages and prices were unlikely to be unduly generous, and to prevent them being over-tyrannous was there not the long arm of the Privy Council?

Elizabethan industrial legislation is best seen in the STATUTE OF ARTIFICERS or of APPRENTICES, passed in 1563. Its principal clauses were:

(*a*) All able-bodied men were liable to serve as agricultural labourers, unless exempted as belonging to special trades or classes.

(*b*) All hirings were to be for the year. No casual day labour.

(*c*) In passing from one employer to another, a certificate of release was necessary from the first.

(*d*) In all industries and trades there should be seven years apprenticeship.

(*e*) Clothiers residing outside the corporate towns could not take as apprentices the sons of even 40*s.* freeholders, but only of those who held a 60*s.* freehold.

(*f*) Wages were to be fixed by the Justices of the Peace, under the supervision of the Privy Council.

It is not easy for us, living in the twentieth century, to judge accurately either the fairness or the wisdom of such an enactment. At first glance one is tempted to call it industrial conscription, if not by law, then by birth. The atmosphere seems entirely that of

> 'God bless the squire and his relations
> And keep us in our proper stations.'

Once an agricultural labourer, always an agricultural labourer; no freedom of movement, consequently little power to bargain

A DYER

as to conditions of work; wages fixed by justices of the employer class and men bound by statute law to accept or starve, some towns indeed going further and forbidding even the liberty to starve, by imprisoning those who refused to work for the statutory wage; the trades in which money might be made closed to the poor man's son by a lengthy apprenticeship, and even a class qualification for entry; things like this seem class legislation of the direst kind, and we remember that Tudor power rested largely on the support of the corporate towns and the *nouveaux riches*. Such an interpretation of the statute

would, however, be very unfair. To get the other point of view let us consider what would have happened had Adam Smith lived two centuries earlier than he did and the statesmen of the age believed that their duty was to leave economic forces to work freely. In that case the lot of the wage-earner would have been much worse. With the worker exposed to the full blast of unlimited competition, all political and municipal power being in the hands of the employer and with no Privy Council to restrain its full exercise, wages would have gone down far below the level of decent subsistence, wealth would have piled on wealth in the hands of the few, all consideration for the welfare of the whole nation, as distinct from the money-making class would have ceased. It is true that the statesmen of the time had no belief in the equal rights of men, but who then had? Society was, by the ordinance of God and Nature, arranged in horizontal strata, and it was most undesirable that these should be disturbed on any large scale. A favoured few might pass from one to the other, but for the majority it was best that they should do their duty in that state of life to which it *had pleased* God to call them. Admitting this outlook and remembering that the world has as yet adopted no other, we shall be more willing to appreciate the really good intentions of the authors of the Act. Stability and contentment was their object; the worker should have a reasonable income with security for its continuance; if not born too low in the social scale he should be thoroughly trained for his work and free, by force of brains and character, to win for himself a place among the advisers of kings. Such a man was Sir Lionel Cranfield, sometime mercer's apprentice, later the rival of Bacon and agent of his downfall. As long as proper consideration was paid to the claims of the master, every effort was made to secure that service should be adequately paid and not exploited. Everything of course depended on the strength, honesty and wisdom of the central control; how far that could be effective we shall shortly see.

The Stuarts continued the industrial policy of Elizabeth, but they lacked her talent for finding a middle path and, since they

were as extravagant as she was parsimonious, their measures were soon complicated and their benevolence vitiated by fiscal considerations. Both James and Charles held very high views of the duty they owed their subjects; they aimed at creating a prosperous and happy people on the condition that all such happiness and prosperity must flow from a royal source. Such an aim demands little short of omniscience in any age, in one so rapidly advancing as the seventeenth century it could only be the dream of a child or a fool. Still it was attempted. There were two methods available, to create regulated companies or to employ royal officials. The Stuarts naturally preferred the latter, and though they encouraged the incorporation of the less wealthy companies we find too often that these soon lapsed into mere tools by which some court monopolist manipulated the trade to his own advantage. The monarchs themselves, however good their intentions, unfortunately lacked the one essential power of choosing wisely their advisers or delegates, and the corruption of Stuart officials, the unblushing and open use of what the American calls 'graft', was universal. When to incompetence and dishonesty was added an obstinate determination to find some means of raising money without the control of Parliament, there was all the material at hand for wild interference in industry and the pursuit of mad or disastrous schemes.

The story of the failure of the scheme of Alderman Cockayne illustrates most of these points. The king's chief dispute with his parliament was his claim to lay imposts on merchandise at his pleasure. It was not easy to defend his claim on grounds of right, and it occurred to the king's advisers that a better basis could be found in the connexion between customs and national rivalry. If other nations excluded our goods or put up tariffs against them it was necessary, they argued, that there should be prompt action on the part of our government, and it was suggested that only the king could act with sufficient speed, and that parliamentary delays prevented us from retaliating on other aggressive commercial nations. It was also desirable to prevent our imports exceeding our exports, whereby gold passed

over the seas and left us dangerously handicapped in case of war. With these ostensible reasons, and behind them the real one of securing a revenue for the Crown that should be outside the control of Parliament, Cockayne's scheme was embarked on in 1615. In return for a monopoly of the export of finished cloth, a substantial income was promised to the king. To secure sufficient material the export of unfinished cloth was forbidden. As the bulk of the cloth export trade was still this unfinished material, the Merchant Adventurers declared they could not carry on and their privileges were promptly transferred to Cockayne and his fellows. But England had no monopoly of mercantilist ideas or powers of retaliation. To our attempt to force on the Dutch markets finished cloth which they did not want and refusal to supply white cloth which they did, the Hollanders replied by excluding all cloth from England, finished or unfinished. James retorted by forbidding export of wool even from Scotland and Ireland, where the trade was considerable. Smuggling was the inevitable result. Attempts to force Dutch ships calling at our ports to take with them cargoes of finished cloth failed likewise. By 1616 there was much unemployment in the weaving trade, and the Dutch were setting out to do their own weaving; there were plans to force merchants to buy cloth they could not sell, and in 1617 the whole scheme was dropped. Had these protectionist methods succeeded as they did in France, the absolute position of the monarch would have been assured, monopolies would have flourished, and there is little reason to suppose a paternal but impecunious government could have prevented further exploitation of the workers.

The Machinery of Government. Constant reference has been made in the preceding paragraphs to the minute care taken by the central government to regulate industry; the question arises, 'How did they manage it?' It is not perhaps so difficult for us to understand their method now as it was a few years ago. We must get rid of our nineteenth-century ideas of the supremacy of Parliament and realize that the Tudor monarch had at least as much power as his parliaments, and that the Stuarts asserted

a right to a great deal more. The King in Council issued proclamations at pleasure and, provided these did not invent new crimes or impose new taxes, they passed unchallenged. It is to the PRIVY COUNCIL we must look to find the power that enforced the remarkable interference with social rather than political matters. It consisted, in 1553, of forty members of whom only eighteen were peers, the rest commoners, and all were servants of the king. A wise monarch consulted and used them, the unwise overrode them with temporary impunity. Such a body, determined to see peace and order in every corner of the realm, working in an age when the royal power was only vaguely defined and when a popular monarch acting in concert with such a band of devoted adherents could stretch it considerably, was able to effect much. Its instruments were two. To the Justices of the Peace was given the power to order and control locally. It was they who fixed wages and prices; they who controlled, in this case in conjunction with special commissioners, the corn trade; they who were responsible for the relief of the poor and the proper performance of their duties by constable and overseer. Usually nominees of the Crown, though some boroughs had the right to elect their own justices, they were very definitely the servants of the Council. They made monthly reports of all that occurred in their district, they wrote to ask advice, and were sharply pulled up if they indulged in any irregularity.

So much for the administration, but how were the decrees enforced and powerful and recalcitrant magnates compelled? For this purpose two penal instruments were at hand, the COURTS of the STAR CHAMBER and of REQUESTS. Actually they were Committees of the Privy Council, and their legality as Law Courts was doubtful, but for a long time they were extremely popular with all except the wealthy and powerful. Tenants oppressed by the 'custom of the manor', townsmen fighting the narrow oligarchy that sought only its own interests appealed to the Court of Requests with a fair chance of success, which would never have been theirs in the Courts of Common Law. For

these new courts offered more than law, they sought to grant justice, and in its name would override a legal decision. Obviously there was in them plenty of room for oppression, and when such courts dealt with religious matters or the king's revenues they became mere high-handed imposers of the king's will. They are seen at their best when dealing with land and industry, and in this case fulfilled admirably the purpose for which they were created, the protection of the weak.

Obviously the machinery described above depended absolutely for success on its motive power. Under Elizabeth and for a time under Charles I the Privy Council worked with admirable thoroughness, justices were instructed, exhorted, and sharply reprimanded as occasion required. But the moment the Council weakened or had its attention distracted by political or fiscal problems, the whole machine stopped, and since the weak had been only protected and not made strong, abuses were even worse than before.

The Poor Law. The effect of the changes of the sixteenth century in producing a crowd of unemployed and vagrants has already been explained, it remains to see how the government faced the difficulty. In the early part of the century the causes behind the alarming phenomenon of bands of sturdy vagrants, ready to steal, bully and trick at any moment, as well as the increasing stream of helpless starving misery, were not understood. That it was not their individual fault, that under the shifting conditions of the time work was not always obtainable, was so new an idea that it simply did not occur. Consequently we find the early efforts for dealing with the problem marked by a brutality that was only modified after fifty years of proved failure.

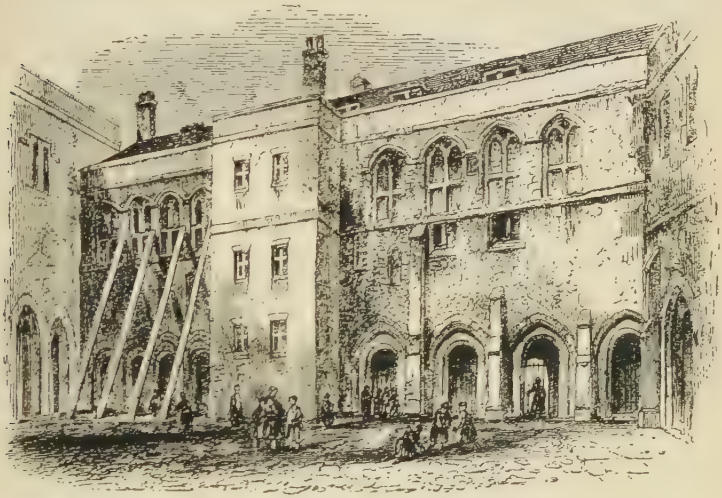
There are three periods to consider:

(*a*) Municipal attempts to deal with the increasing numbers of semi-destitute within the towns. This lasts till about 1569.

(*b*) From 1569–97 experimental efforts by Parliament to deal with the problem on national lines.

(*c*) The great Acts of 1597 and 1601 and their administration by the Privy Council.

The Municipal experiments were various. We must remember that the relief of the poor was still regarded as a charitable duty on the part of individuals, not as a function of the city or state as a whole. Anything like compulsory contribution was quite impossible at first. Another point to be noted is that the sixteenth-century authorities, in this case wiser than those of the nineteenth, believed that prevention was better than cure, and did not wait for a family to be destitute before providing help. Indeed, much



THE PRIORY CLOISTERS, CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

of the regulation turns on what we should call emergency help, such as cheap corn in time of scarcity, loans to replace loss by fire or flood, the apprenticing of children of poor parents, and so on. The following typical efforts are recorded of London and some other towns. Corn was stored, and thrown on the market in times of high prices. Beggars were forbidden to ask charity without a licence, and in 1524 in London a search was made for able-bodied idlers, who were whipped. In 1547 the London Common Council levied a compulsory tax for relief of the poor. At the instigation of Bishop Latimer in 1552 a compre-

hensive scheme for London was adopted. St. Thomas's and St. Bartholomew's Hospitals were to relieve the sick and impotent, Christ's Hospital was founded for fatherless children, and in 1557 the palace of Bridewell was turned over to the City as a place where sturdy vagabonds were put to work and poor children taught a craft. The organization of Bridewell was not so much like a gaol as is the modern workhouse. The inmates were paid for their work and from this wage paid for their board and lodging. They worked at all kinds of handicraft, the material being supplied by the city members of the trade, who paid for the labour. The goods so made, therefore, did not compete on the open market with the product of ordinary labour, and so bring down the general price. Finally, Bethlehem Hospital took charge of the insane.

A BEGGAR

All these schemes were only partially successful. There was a difficulty in raising funds. People objected to compulsory taxation for the purpose. Worse than this, however, London and other towns, such as Norwich, which took the matter seriously in hand, became the Mecca of all the destitute of the countryside. Obviously if the thing was to be done at all it must be done everywhere.

During the early period the government had not been altogether idle. In 1528 Wolsey ordered the clothiers to go on manufacturing, even though the action of the government had closed the Flemish markets, but the result was a speedy modification of our foreign policy. In 1527, during a time of scarcity, a Commission was appointed to prevent engrossing of corn, and at other times prices were regulated. In 1531 Parliament

ordered the licensing of the impotent poor to beg, sturdy beggars to be put in the stocks or whipped, and sent to their native place. In 1536 beggars returned to their native place were kept at the public expense, and, if able, made to work. Alms were to be collected every Sunday. In 1547 slavery was made the penalty for begging, but in 1549 this order was repealed and whipping restored. In 1551 alms were ordered to be collected by the mayor or by the parson and churchwarden, with all possible persuasion. In 1563 compulsion was in sight, for the magistrates were ordered to assess a recalcitrant giver.

A BEGGAR

The second period saw the attempt of Parliament to deal with the matter for the whole nation. Its Acts were largely experimental, and repressive rather than preventive. That of 1572 was very severe. It included even the workman on strike for higher wages, as also the unlicensed strolling player. For the first offence a vagabond was liable to be whipped and bored through the ear, for the second adjudged a felon, and for the third the penalty was death. In spite of its severity the Act was at certain times rigorously enforced. In the Middlesex sessions of 1572–5, 44 vagabonds were sentenced to be branded, 5 to be hanged, and 8 set to service. Such a case as that of Joan Wynstone, who was whipped and branded on February 6, on July 26 saved from hanging by being set to service to her husband,

and having run away was caught on October 3 and thereupon hanged, makes one wonder what domestic tragedy lies hidden behind the ghastly record. The same Act threw the burden of the impotent poor on the district and authorized compulsory contributions from all. In 1576 an Act ordered Houses of Correction, like Bridewell, to be erected in every county. In 1589 attempts to deal with the housing question were made.

TWO PRETENDED FORTUNE-TELLERS IN THE PILLORY

Only one family was to live in one house, no new houses were to be built in London or Westminster except for well-to-do folk, and in the country no cottages were to be built with less than four acres of land attached. No suggestion was made as to where the displaced slum dwellers were to go, or to compel landowners to build cottages at all, so needless to say the problem was not solved.

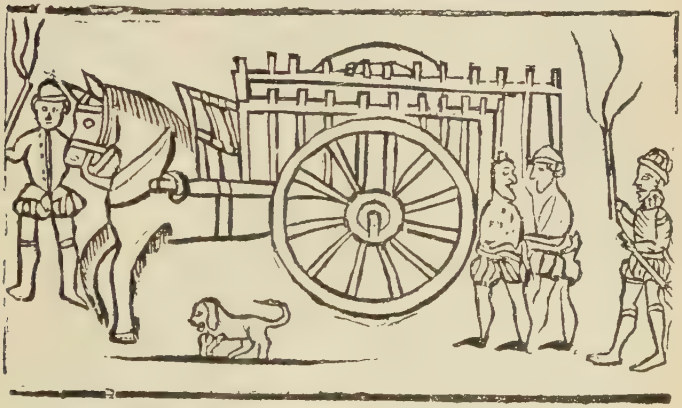
The third period opens with the great Act of 1597, which was completed and confirmed in 1601. This was really a compre-

hensive code dealing with the whole question and was based on the experience gained during the past century. This Act for the Relief of the Poor placed the control in the hands of the Churchwardens of the parish and four overseers. It ordered:

(*a*) Poor children to be set to work or apprenticed;

(*b*) Material to be provided for the adult unemployed to work on;

(*c*) Hospitals for the impotent to be built on waste land;



WHIPPING VAGABONDS AT THE CART'S TAIL

(*d*) Funds to be levied on the district, by distress if necessary;

(*e*) All beggars, except those begging in their own parish, to be classed as rogues.

The Act for the Punishment of Rogues, &c., repealed former statutes and authorized the building of Houses of Correction. Rogues were to be whipped and sent to the House of Correction at the place of their birth and thence set to service.

With regard to these Acts, it is well to note a distinction was made between those who could not and those who would not work; that the 'right to work' was recognized and the burden of finding it thrown on the district officials. It must also be added that the Houses of Correction were, up to the time of

the Civil War, better in many ways than modern workhouses. Since they provided work for willing workers as well as for professed rogues, they had less of the prison about them. The dietary of the House at Bury compares favourably with modern practice. Unfortunately the finding of work for those who were willing was the first part of the legislation to lapse, and in 1609 it seems no longer to have been compulsory.

The administration of this great Code of Laws for the relief of the poor depended finally on the Privy Council. The overseers

A MINSTREL IN THE STOCKS

were under the supervision of the Justices of the Peace, and to learn what they could be like, if not kept up to their duties, we may turn to the plays of Shakespeare. On the constables depended the arrest of the sturdy rogue, and too many of them were of Dogberry's way of thinking :—

'How if a' will not stand ?'

Dogberry. 'Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go ; and presently call the rest of the watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave.'

Before we blame too much such easy-going ways, we should remember that the constable held an unpaid office forced often

on a reluctant citizen and that the vagabond of Elizabeth's day was as tough a customer as ever a posse of London police are called upon to deal with. For high-handed insolence he could only probably be matched nowadays in the wilder parts of America and Australia, and since the punishment for violence was, in the case of a confirmed rogue, the same as for wandering, viz. hanging, he had little to deter him from resistance if caught. At periods when the Privy Council was strong and vigilant,

A PEDLAR

e. g. 1629–41, the law was probably well administered and all parties kept to their duties. Such a Council was strong enough, if it were honest enough, to be no respecter of persons, and we do actually find it interfering to relieve the poor and to prevent sweating. In 1637 it sent Sir Thomas Reynolds to the Fleet for trying to force his workmen to accept goods instead of wages, and kept him there till he had paid his men double what they had lost.

The chief difficulty in getting the law administered was the anxiety of every district to keep down its rates by passing on the burden to another neighbourhood. Endless disputes as to

the question of 'settlement' arose. The parish where a man was born was supposed to keep him, but in days of no birth registration this was not always easy to determine, and indeed in this twentieth century the Settlement Law is so complicated as to be a source of trouble to most of those concerned. Besides this, poor people often suffered by being turned out of the place in which they had lived for years, for fear they might come on the rates, many who, left alone, might have kept themselves afloat being thus turned to vagabondage.

A few other devices for the relief of the poor may be noted :—

1. The billeting of children on richer folk.

2. Temporary assistance to poor people who were not destitute, e. g. fuel in winter, free medical help, or assistance in time of plague.

3. Compulsion on corn dealers to sell part of their supplies to the poor at less than the market rate.

4. Prevention of malting and the export of beer in times of scarcity.

5. Founding of almshouses and hospitals, both by private charity and from the County rates.

6. Granting of pensions to soldiers and sailors and to the aged poor. To the latter the rate was usually 1*s.* a week, with sometimes a cottage on the waste added.

7. The sending of children too young to be apprenticed to 'a knittinge schooldame'; they were also boarded out.

8. 'Emigration' for vagrants—in other words transportation as slaves for a period to Virginia and Barbadoes. At the end of their period they were given land.

9. Loans to young tradesmen and artificers to set up in business.

10. The supply of work to willing workers, often in their own houses instead of at the House of Correction.

All these measures combined seem to have been successful, for by 1640 the really alarming army of sturdy rogues and cheats had ceased to be a danger, and desperate poverty at least had largely disappeared. How far the impotent and aged escaped from misery and suffering is more difficult to say.

Revenue. The connexion between the Crown's revenue and industrial legislation has been pointed out already; it may be well to see in what way the sources and methods of raising money for national expenditure had changed.

(*a*) First of all, the customary dues on imports and exports remained. Tunnage and poundage, with subsidies on wool, skins, and leather were, until 1625, the king's for life. The revenue from this source was, however, considerably lessened by the methods of collection, which allowed fraud on a large scale, as much as three-quarters being, in the opinion of the Venetian ambassador in 1557, lost by peculation and smuggling and expenses of collection. It was often farmed, and in 1590 the farmer, Sir Thomas Smith, was made to disgorge some of his ill-gotten gains, and the revenue from this source rose from £24,000 to £50,000. In 1613 it was under £150,000, and the appointment of Cranfield in 1615, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, raised it to £190,000 in two more years; by the accession of Charles I it had reached £323,000.

(*b*) Grants of fifteenths and tenths were continued at intervals, the last being in 1623. They yielded about £30,000.

(*c*) But expenses were increasing, the value of money declining, and more taxes became necessary. These took the form of 'subsidies'. A full subsidy was supposed to be 4*s.* in the £ on the yearly value of freehold land and 2*s.* 8*d.* in the £ on all movables, including crops. The apparel of a man, his wife, and his children was free from tax; those who had less than £3 worth of goods were exempt; aliens paid double. Many attempts were made to get a real assessment, but were successfully resisted. No man paid on both land and goods, and landowners managed to throw most of the burden on those who paid on movables. Landowners of Gloucestershire, mostly retired Bristol merchants who seem to have anticipated the methods of latter-day Chicago traders, were assessed on their lands for such absurd sums as £30 and £40. Justices of the Peace, whose statutory qualification for their position was £20, would assess themselves at £6 and £10, when their actual income was at

least £100. In 1522 the citizens of London successfully resisted an attempt to force them to make their returns on oath! By the end of the sixteenth century a subsidy became a sum of about £80,000 distributed over the country 'as before'.

(*d*) In the course of the Reformation certain revenues originally belonging to the Church passed to the king. Such were first-fruits and tenths of ecclesiastical benefices, transferred in 1534. As they were made on the assessment of 1291, they did not represent one-fifth of the real value.

(*e*) In 1641 a poll-tax was levied and produced £400,000 in sums ranging from £100 to 6*d*.

(*f*) Lastly, there were the feudal revenues, such as fines for knighthoods, wardships, and so on. These were rigorously demanded during the twelve years that Charles ruled without a parliament.

Besides the above were the monopolies already described, and Charles's ship-writs. The latter are sufficiently dealt with in political histories.

Coinage. A word must be said as to the state of the coinage. It will be remembered that both Henry VIII and the government of Edward VI had debased it so that the value of a shilling had sunk to 2½*d*. Among the first cares of Elizabeth was its re-establishment. It was a large undertaking and managed with considerable skill by Thomas Gresham. The first step was to stamp the debased coins with a mark which should show something nearer their real value. The silver testoon, whose nominal value was 6*d*., was marked to 4½*d*. and the worst specimens to 2¼*d*. Then a date was set by which they would be exchanged for good silver coins. Similar dealings were arranged with regard to other coins, and within a year, at Michaelmas 1561, the whole transaction was complete. The government undertook the cost of recoining, the loss on the individual coins fell on their possessors, and as a net result the government made a profit on the business. On the other hand, the trade of the country was set at last on a safe basis of a proper exchange commodity.

Summary. 1. The government dealt with the agrarian

difficulties of the time by a series of Acts to prevent excessive enclosure for the purpose of sheep-farming. The administration of these Acts was enforced spasmodically by commissioners and, though they did not prevent all enclosure, they certainly tended to act as a drag on too swift a change.

2. The corn policy of the government depended on three factors: the desirability of inducing farmers to grow corn instead of sheep, the necessities of the towns especially of London,

ARTISANS AT WORK COINING

and the importance of preventing distress among the poorest of the people. Of these the two last outweighed the first and exportation of corn was strictly controlled, as were the doings of corn-bodgers and other middlemen. At the same time the farmers did get a guarantee of a minimum price, though a low one.

3. During this 150 years the control of industry passed entirely to the central government. The policy of Elizabeth was wholly in favour of the corporate towns and the regulated companies, and there was much legislation to prevent the growth of manufactures in new districts. Within the industries the government aimed at stability and order, passing laws to prevent a man

changing his trade easily, to secure a sufficiency of agricultural labour by enforcing it on the majority of those born in rural districts, enforcing a universal seven years' apprenticeship, and preventing casual employment. Wages were fixed by the Justices of the Peace.

The Stuarts continued the policy of minute central regulation, but were driven by their financial needs to the creation of close corporations and monopolies, which alienated eventually most of the trading and industrial classes.

4. The Tudor and Stuart instrument of government was not Parliament, but the Privy Council. This powerful body had its eye and hand in every corner of the realm and controlled the minutest details. Its instruments to secure its power were the Courts of the Star Chamber and of Requests, both powerful enough to deal with the haughtiest offender.

5. After a century of experiment, a series of Acts for the Relief of the Poor and the Suppression of Rogues was passed in 1597 and remained the basis of our Poor Law till 1833. It aimed at succouring the sick, aged, and impotent, at training the fatherless child, providing work for those unemployed who were willing to work, and forcing to work the wilfully idle, the rogue, and the vagabond. The units of administration were the parish and the county, and the officers were under the control of the Privy Council. It reached its greatest efficiency under the absolute government of Charles I.

6. The revenue of the Crown consisted of the established customs, grants of fifteenths and tenths, the feudal revenues and the proceeds of patents and monopolies. These were supplemented by grants of subsidies consisting of an income-tax on land and a capital levy on goods. The revenue tended to be inadequate, partly owing to faulty methods of collection, but also to increasing prices together with additional claims on the central administration. Although the old idea that 'the king shall live of his own' was gone, Englishmen still resented taxation and were grudging suppliers of the royal needs. The extravagance of the Stuarts brought matters to a crisis.

PART V. 1660–1750

1. Rural England from the Restoration to the Eve of the Great Enclosures

This period of a hundred years was transitional in the history of rural England. During it there were no startling changes, no rapid deterioration of one class or another. It is only by looking back at the end of it that the beginnings are seen of those ruinous currents that were to end in the Niagara that swept away the English peasant.

During the sixteenth century the condition of the small peasant had changed rapidly for the worse, with the inevitable accompaniment of social misery and dislocation. By the second decade of the seventeenth century the process of deterioration had slowed down; the peasant holder did not recover his lost ground, but his condition did not greatly worsen. The same statement is true for the period we are now dealing with. There was much talk of improved methods of agriculture, but little actual improvement made. Enclosures proceeded slowly, the ingrained inertia of rural England survived the upheaval of the sixteenth century and blocked the way to any rapid change. There was a tendency to consolidate holdings into farms of 300 to 400 acres, which were more profitable and capable of more productive agriculture, and, in spite of the assertions of their advocates, this movement did drive the small peasant holder from the soil. But the number of enclosures previous to 1760 was comparatively small; there were some 250 Acts of Parliament during the first half of the eighteenth century and a certain number of enclosures by mutual consent, resulting altogether in less than 350,000 acres being enclosed. At the same time several farms tended to congregate into one man's hands, and this created a class of wealthy tenant-farmers, employing wage-

earning labourers instead of small holders, living largely on the produce of their land. At the same time the large farmers and landowners greedily absorbed the commons as opportunity offered, and without his common rights it was very difficult for the small freeholder or cottager to live. But the process was slow; the bulk of the nation was still dependent on the work of its own hands in its own fields, and it was not till after 1750

A CROSS-CUT SAW

that the process of driving the rural worker from his home began seriously. In 1656 Gregory King estimated that there were in England 160,000 freeholders and 150,000 farmers with incomes averaging £50, as against 50,000 shopkeepers and 60,000 artisans with incomes of £45 and £38 average respectively. He reckoned that more than half the population were above the wage-earning class.

Increased power of the class of large landholders. The most striking change of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth

centuries was the return to power of the landowner. We have seen that Tudor power was based on the new aristocracy of successful business men, the 'Commonwealth' had been made by the smaller trader and merchant, but with the Restoration came reaction. The Cavalier parliaments were dominated by the country party and the well-being of their own class was their chief concern. The power of the Crown was breaking;

A FLAIL

Parliament ruled the government because it had at last secured real control of the nation's purse, and the House of Commons ruled Parliament. The Revolution did not greatly alter matters; the Whig policy was to encourage industry, and agriculture was the greatest of English industries. For 150 years the large landowner retained his power and used it shamelessly in his own interest.

His first step was to make himself absolute owner of the land he held. He had long been such *de facto*, he now proceeded to legitimize his position. The feudal baron had been a *tenant*,

and even in 1660 land held by military tenure was, nominally at least, the king's. The copyholder had long since freed himself from personal service and held his land by a money rent, the tenant-in-chief still paid his feudal dues of wardship, marriage, fines, &c. These dues had long seemed a grievous burden, and even in James I's time there had been a move to get rid of them; the Restoration parliament of landowners was determined to see the last of them. The obvious substitute for them in the Crown revenue was a land tax on the land held by military service, but the ingenious holders of power saw a chance of repudiating their own liabilities and throwing them on the nation at large. They substituted for the king's feudal revenues certain Customs and Excise,[1] and while retaining their own copyhold rents, unblushingly transferred the rent of their own much larger estates to the people at large. Once every man in England paid, either in money rent or service, for the land he claimed the right to use; since 1660 it has been the absolute property of a favoured few.

Their next procedure was to gain government protection for agriculture and the maintenance of prices, and the Act of Settlement helped to secure them a supply of labour at prices fixed by themselves. There was nothing to restrain them; the Crown, which in Tudor times had been a serious drag on their acquisitiveness, was powerless; the Church, which in the Middle Ages had offered a way of escape to the ambitious and an unreasoning but seasonable charity to the unfortunate, had sunk to be a mere appanage of the landed class, its wealthier members one more set of parasites on the land, its poorer priests servants and hangers-on of the lord. At no time in our history was the prestige of both Church and Crown at so low an ebb as during the first half of the eighteenth century.

The advantageous position acquired by the landowner is well seen in figures given by Arthur Young, who wrote full and descriptive accounts of certain journeys he took during the latter part of the eighteenth century. In 1770 rent was about

[1] See p. 302.

10s. an acre, which was 20 times that of the fifteenth century, the price of wheat was 6½ times, that of labour 3½ times what it had been three centuries before. Obviously it was the great landlord who benefited most by the change, and his improved position had been won mainly at the cost of the agricultural labourer.

Condition of the agricultural population. During the first part of the period the condition of the rural villager was bad; after 1700 it improved somewhat, being better than at any time since the fifteenth century. In 1662 the position of those on the border line of extreme poverty had been made worse by an Act passed solely in the interest of the employer and the ratepayer. This was the notorious ACT OF SETTLEMENT. Its purpose was to prevent vagabonds and vagrants exploiting those parishes which carried out their duties under the Poor Law properly, by settling there and so relieving of the burden the districts that refused to make adequate provision. There no doubt was an abuse of this kind, and we may at least give the originators of the Act credit for blindness in their action. For the Act empowered overseers to secure an order from the Justices of the Peace to remove from their parish any new-comer who occupied a tenement of annual value less than £10, unless he could give security that he would not become chargeable to the parish. He might stay, however, during harvest time. The authors of the Act probably did not foresee the terrible effect of chaining the unemployed to a district where no work could be had, but when they did discover this unforeseen effect, they legislated, not to free the labourer, but to allow him to move under licence only, with suitable guarantees from his parish that he could be sent back if he sank to a condition of needing poor relief. This was in 1697. The Revolution that freed the upper and middle classes from the tyranny of the Crown had no freedom for the unrepresented class, of which the Crown had in the past not infrequently been the protector. It was no thanks to Parliament that the condition of the rural worker did not deteriorate more rapidly.

Classes of Society found in an Eighteenth-century Village.

1. Yeomen or Freeholders. These may be divided into three grades: (*a*) many in the south and midlands with incomes equal to those of the gentry; (*b*) others who supplemented the produce of their land by practice of some domestic industry; these would appear most in the manufacturing areas; (*c*) a class of freeholders whose holding was merely a cottage and a scrap of land, who had to work as day-labourers to gain a living.

2. Copyholders. These were considerable in number and of two classes, copyholders of inheritance and for lives. They were also divided according to whether the fine paid on taking up a holding was certain or uncertain, i.e. fixed by custom or dependent on the will of the landlord. In the north the copyholder still bore traces of his ancient villein status, for many held by tenures carrying duties of boon-days. In Cumberland two-thirds of the land tenures were of this kind. In wealth copyholders varied almost as much as did freeholders, and copyholds of inheritance with fixed fine were regarded as equal in value to freeholds.

3. Farmers. These held either by lease, usually for a number of lives, or were mere tenants at will. The landlords foolishly preferred the latter, since it gave them greater freedom in consolidating their estates, but it meant bad farming, since the tenant had no interest in looking ahead and improving the land and tenements accordingly. Middle-sized and small farms were still in the majority, but the tendency towards grouping in larger lots was increasing all the time.

4. Besides these three legitimate classes of landholders there was a considerable number of Squatters, who had built huts on the commons or woods and perhaps cleared a bit of land. These were entirely irregular, but often winked at by landowners. Sometimes the squatters were fairly prosperous, as in Blofield, in Norfolk, which had 700 acres of heath of which 30 squatter families had occupied 40 acres and acquired 23 cows, 18 horses, besides donkeys, pigs, geese, and poultry. But more

often they were mere settlements of hovels, inhabited by the idle or the lawless. The villagers often objected to them and tore down their fences. They are important chiefly because their existence was one of the excuses put forward for the enclosure of commons, and they were purposely used as a blind behind which the eviction from legitimate cottages was effected as well.

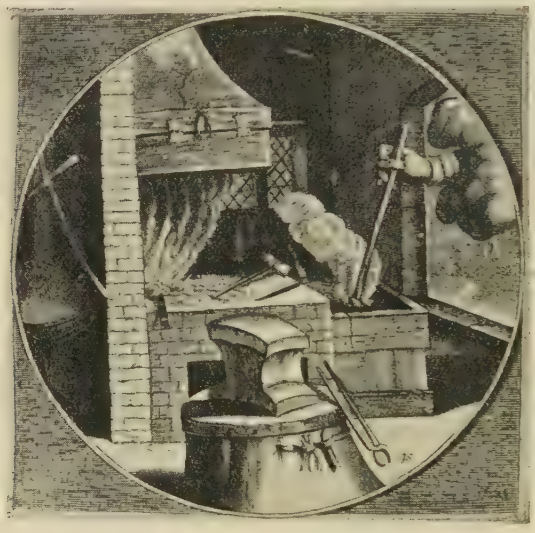
5. The Labourers. These were either married men living in cottages or farm servants living with the farmer. The wage of the former was about 1*s.* a day, or 1*s.* 6*d.* for skilled work, though there was much piece-work, and in many parts they were paid partly in kind.

The farm servants consisted of a bailiff or foreman, ploughman, cow-keeper, shepherd, carter, and dairymaids. They were hired, usually by the year at the hiring fairs, and received a wage and their board. In the south-west, parish children of 7 and 8 years old were often apprenticed to the farmers, and usually treated very badly.

It will be seen from the above that there were many grades of society in the villages of the early eighteenth century, all drawing a livelihood from the land. There was a tendency for the smaller holders to disappear, especially the yeoman, who would sell his freehold and, with the money so obtained, stock a much larger tenant-farm and so make more money; but it was not till after the mid-century that a real agricultural proletariat appeared, dependent for its subsistence on wage-labour alone. Up to 1750 the thrifty farm servant could hope to save, and after perhaps 10 years' service marry with enough money to stock a small tenant farm. With thrift and good management he might hope to rise considerably.

Agricultural Improvements and the Early Pioneers. England in the early eighteenth century had a very different appearance from that which meets us now, as we gaze out of our railway carriages on a chequer board of green or golden fields divided by those hedges that to the travelled eye are the glory of our English country and one of the chief memories of the exile.

Not only were at least half the fields of all the country 'open', and in the midlands and south this was the condition of much the greater part, but the quantity of waste and heath was very large. It was at least 10 million acres, probably more, i.e. a third of the entire area. Districts that are now among the most fertile, some of the richest farming land we have, were then mere derelict wastes. From Bridlington to Spurn Head

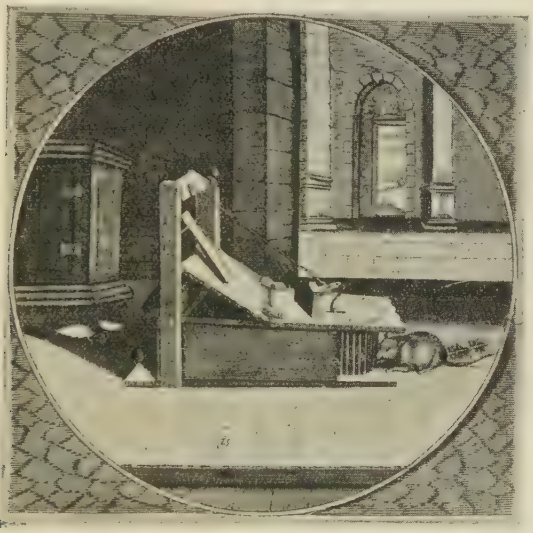


A BLACKSMITH'S SHOP

was an extensive swamp, where willows alone marked out the high road from Beverley to Hull; east of Lincoln and Sleaford was a land as desolate as were the water-logged fens that stretched south and south-east, where now are some of the richest farms in England; round London, Hounslow was still a heath, and Epping Forest something far too desolate and dangerous to be the playground of East London, while deer roamed wild round Enfield; even the Weald of Surrey and Sussex was so little cultivated that it still had posts across it to guide the letter-carriers. Fields had not yet encroached on the bare slopes of

Sussex chalk downs or up the wild high coombes of Dartmoor and Exmoor.

Agriculture, too, still followed the ways of the Middle Ages, and the old rotation of winter corn, summer corn, and fallow still prevailed. But there were pioneers and heralds of a change. For long the Dutch had known and used better methods, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century we borrowed from



A MOUSE-TRAP of the period

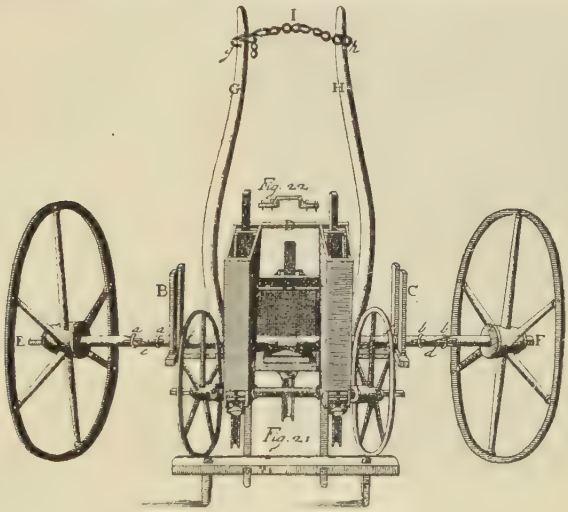
them the cultivation of winter roots, and in the early eighteenth of artificial grasses. Both these enabled the Dutch to keep many more cattle through the winter. The changes were, however, confined to a few experimenters, and advocated rather than actually carried out. The early writers of the seventeenth century, such as Plattes in 1638 and Blith in 1649, complained loudly of the difficulties in the way of improvement, viz. the absence of security of tenure, which made farmers unwilling to experiment or to sink money in schemes that required years before profit could be hoped for, and above all the open fields

that prevented one man from changing his methods unless all his neighbours did so. No winter crops could be grown where rights of pasture over the common fields existed from August to February. Cross ploughing was impossible on the narrow strips; drainage, if attempted, could be ruined by one careless or obstinate villager; weeds were everywhere, and one lazy cultivator could make useless all the diligence of his neighbours. There was serious waste of time in going from strip to strip, often a mile or more away from the village in different directions, in waiting the pleasure of the others to plough or reap. The impossibility of caring properly for cattle and sheep mixed up with everybody else's in often overcrowded pastures, together with the lack of winter food, made the growing of cattle for food a very risky and speculative business. It was therefore only a few men who were enthusiastic enough under such difficulties to try for better things. JETHRO TULL, one of the earliest, worked in the face of the greatest difficulties, including a strike of labourers, who objected to sowing seed in rows and thinly spread, when, as everybody knew, the proper way was to scatter broadcast and as thickly as possible. Born in 1674, after a varied career in law, music, and travel, Tull settled down at the age of 25 to study farming with brains. His great contribution to the subject was his proof of the value of sowing in rows with constant hoeing of the ground between. He invented

JETHRO TULL. From a contemporary painting.

a machine for sowing seed, and worked on the principle that constant stirring up of the land could take the place of manure. By breaking up the soil he let air and rain into the roots and avoided the crop of weeds that always followed the use of farmyard manure. The constant tillage kept down the weeds as well, and he found he could grow without fallow crop after crop of wheat, and heavier than those of his neighbours.

But all such proofs of better methods were lost on the open-



JETHRO TULL'S WHEAT DRILL

field farmer, and it was not till the great landlords took up the question of farming that any real progress was made. The first of these great men was CHARLES VISCOUNT TOWNSHEND, who in 1730, having quarrelled with Walpole, retired from political life to his estates in Norfolk. His main contribution to the science was his study of the rotation of crops. His land was of the poorest; its chief products were described as 'nettles and warrens'. First he revived the use of marl, and then started growing turnips. Following Tull, he drilled and horse-hoed. Lastly, he devised a four-course rotation of crops, by which he

saved the year of fallow. The idea was to introduce a profitable crop which would do for the land what the fallow did. Such crops are roots, especially turnips, and grasses like clover. Both of these could be used for winter food for beasts, hence the farmer could keep larger stocks and get more manure ; the usual rotation was wheat, turnips, barley, clover. So successful was Townshend and those who followed him on Norfolk lands that he has come down to posterity as ' Turnip Townshend '.

CHARLES VISCOUNT TOWNSHEND

Summary. 1. The chief feature of the period is the predominance obtained by the greater landed interest. They had secured control of Parliament, and the power of the Crown steadily lessened, consequently they were able to rule the country in their own interest. The chief measures which secured their position were the abolition of military tenures and the Act of Settlement.

2. The population of rural England still consisted of various classes with graduated wealth and position. There was not as yet any great gap in the social ladder, though the tendency was for small holders to drop out and the land to accumulate in the hands of the few. There was a class of wage labourers, but comparatively few were absolutely dependent on these earnings ; most of them held some small parcel of land or could hope by thrift and energy to do so.

3. The seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries heard much discussion of agricultural improvements and some experiments and changes were made, chiefly in the cultivation of roots and grasses. But open-field farming stood in the way of progress

and such experiments as were made were, for the most part, the work of great landowners. The most noted pioneer of this piece of progress was Townshend, who revolutionized the agriculture of Norfolk and turned it from one of the poorest agricultural parts of England to one of the richest.

2. Manufacture, Trade, and Commerce

It was during this period that the shifting of the manufacturing centres of England began to produce that redistribution of the population which makes the centres of modern English life so different from those of the Middle Ages.

JOHN KAY

In the wool trade the rise of Yorkshire is the chief event. Up to 1700 the great centre of the woollen manufacture was East Anglia, especially Norfolk. For some time in the villages on the Yorkshire hills a domestic system of wool-weaving and spinning had been growing. Norfolk itself was dependent largely on Yorkshire yarn, spun from the long wool of Yorkshire sheep, for its manufacture of worsteds and silk and wool mixtures. The Norfolk sheep could only supply short wool, which in its turn found its way to Yorkshire weavers to be made into cloth. Naturally if Yorkshire could make the yarn it came about that her more enterprising inhabitants should try to weave it too. So she gradually rose to rival Norfolk in the latter's coarser fabrics, as well as making her own cloth. Owing to a large increase of trade, there was room at first for both, but with the advent of machinery after 1780 the natural advantages of coal and iron fields in Yorkshire enabled that county to secure so

great a lead that, when at last the new methods broke through the conservatism of the Norfolk manufacture, it was too late for the latter to recover. The invention of Kay's flying shuttle in 1733 was a boon to the broadcloth weavers of Yorkshire, but of less value to the narrow Norfolk looms. In the first case it substituted one man for two, so that the domestic workers could earn more; in the second the benefit to the individual wage-earner was small, he might work more quickly, but he earned no more per piece. The expansion of the wool industry was not, however, as great as it might have been, owing to the government policy of starving foreign manufacturers of wool, by prohibiting export. This, combined with the policy of encouraging corn-growing by bounties, tended to turn pasture to arable and so produce less wool.

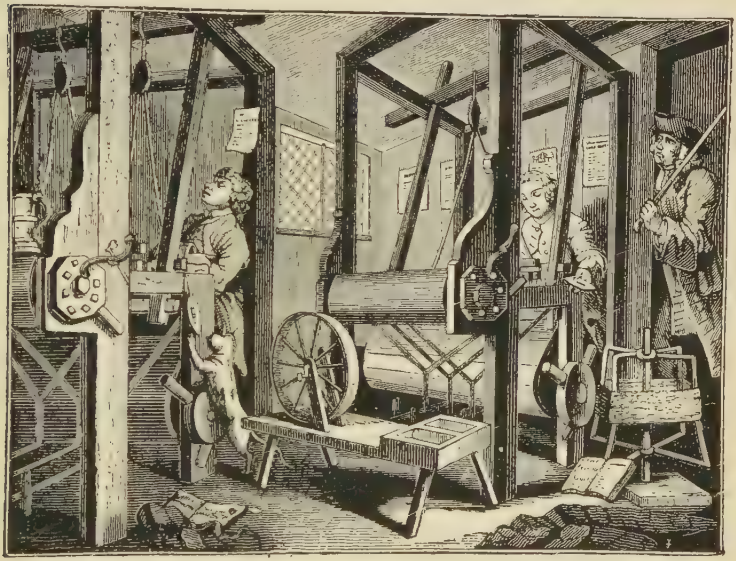
The cotton industry was discouraged by Parliament, for it rivalled the wool trade and gave no work to English farmers. In 1720 the use of calico was even forbidden.

The linen trade flourished in Scotland, especially after the Union in 1707, less so in Ireland. The Irish were only allowed to sell linen goods to the colonies, while Scotland had the same markets as England. The English feared that if we encouraged Irish linen too much our trade from Holland would suffer and with it our cloth export to the Dutch markets.

The iron industry, as we saw, had already shifted during our last period. In 1735 Abraham Darby made coke from coal and substituted this for wood charcoal in smelting. In 1766 a reverberatory furnace for using coal to convert pig-iron to bar-iron was invented, and from that time onwards the connexion between iron manufacture and coalfields was established. The iron industry affords a good illustration of the narrowly selfish outlook of the age. A proposal to encourage smelting in the colonies was opposed by the ironmasters who owned the forges, the proprietors of woods who feared their value would decrease, and the farmers who used the bark of the trees. The manufacturers of iron articles, however, supported the proposal, but only so far as the production of pig and bar iron.

The coal trade was so far almost confined to Newcastle, though there had always been some mining in Yorkshire. The hostmen of Newcastle were incorporated by Elizabeth, but the charter was not renewed after 1679 and the trade became free. After 1750 it increased enormously.

Many industries, especially textiles, received fresh impetus from the French immigration that followed the Revocation of



WEAVING. The apprentice holds a flying shuttle in his left hand.

the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685. For a century French Huguenots, protected by the Edict of Toleration issued by Henri IV, had prospered, and they now formed a large portion of the industrial part of the nation. They were skilled artisans or capitalist organizers of manufacture, just that part of itself the French nation could least do without. To the number of 80,000 they were made a present to a rival nation by the bigotry of a blind despot. The total number that left France was at least five times the above estimate of those coming to England.

Some even managed to bring away their plant and their capital, many brought only their lives and their skill. The advantage to English industry was great. Wiser than their ancestors, the Englishmen of 1685 for the most part welcomed the refugees. They settled mainly in London, though some passed on to America, Ireland, and Scotland. They gave fresh life to our silk manufacture, henceforth settled in Spitalfields; in Soho they set up many trades, improving them both by their skill and taste; to Ipswich they took the manufacture of sail-cloth, and they gave new life to the linen looms of Ireland and Scotland.

Spread of the Capitalist System. Although the greater part of English industry was organized under the domestic system, its control was passing more and more into the hands of the large capitalists. The change came by degrees and more quickly in some places and trades than others. With it came the usual labour troubles, and the attempts of the employers to meet them. Already in 1718 there was a proclamation against 'unlawful clubs', which on closer scrutiny turn out to be trade unions. In 1721 there was an association among the working tailors, and in 1727 combination among wool workers was made illegal. At the same time the employers were allowed to combine to protect themselves against fraudulent neglect or theft on the part of the workers. In 1754 there was a strike at Norwich of 300 wool weavers, who were supported for six weeks by their fellow workmen. There is also evidence of the existence of an employing and a wage-earning class among the spinning and the cloth-finishing trades. Even the felt-makers, who, it will be remembered, were a company of small masters that broke from the tyranny of the capitalist haberdashers early in the seventeenth century, became after the Restoration a body of capitalist employers.

The system, however, is most evident in new trades or those where the plant required was expensive. Gun-making in Birmingham, paper, glass, the improved silk manufacture brought over by the Huguenots belong to the former class, the framework knitters were a good example of the latter. The

stocking frame was invented in the time of Elizabeth and a chartered company formed, but early in the eighteenth century we find the journeymen struggling to force the masters to keep the rules, and failing. The recalcitrant masters migrated to Nottingham and Leicester, successfully used the House of Commons to prevent the London company enforcing its rules, and the very worst forms of capitalist evils rapidly spread through the industry. Most of the work was done by parish apprentices and the journeymen were constantly unemployed. The apprentices were unprotected and consequently badly treated.

The passing of Truck Acts is also a sign of the spread of a wage-earning class. A system of paying partly in food or goods, which, in a simpler society, had been quite good and useful, became merely a plan for swindling the worker and has been gradually put an end to in trade after trade. An Act, in 1701, forbade payment of wages in 'cloth, victuals or commodities' instead of in coin, in the textile and iron industries. But the custom grew throughout the eighteenth century.

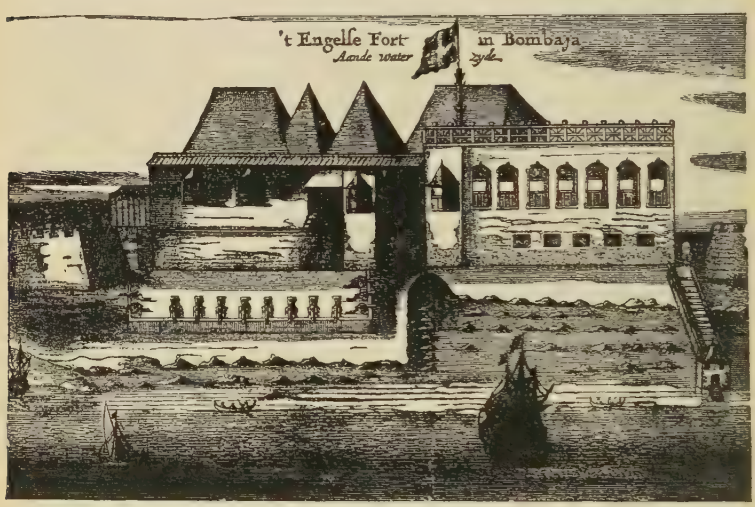
The Fate of the Regulated and Joint-stock Companies. For a few years under Cromwell trade had been open and free to all, but the system was not regarded as a success and the Companies were revived. They gradually lost their importance in European markets, but in far-distant or half-civilized countries their uses remained. It was important that there should be an authority whom the foreign states could hold responsible for the actions of traders, and naturally the Company could not be responsible for non-members over whom it had no control. On the other hand, the native government could not be expected to distinguish one Englishman from another. After 1689 the exclusiveness of the great Companies was largely abolished, the entrance fee lowered and membership thrown open to all who cared to pay the small sum demanded. Regulation and control continued, however, to a considerable extent.

The Eastland Company seems to have been less of a monopoly than others, and the Baltic trade was gradually thrown open. It was, however, eventually secured by the Dutch.

The same thing happened to the Muscovy Company, whose trade was in 1697 thrown practically open by lowering the entrance fee to £5.

The Turkey Company was not finally thrown open till 1753. It was the earliest of our trade rivalries with France.

The Company whose history is of increasing importance after 1660 is the EAST INDIA. Up to 1701 it was spending much energy and capital in fighting 'interlopers'. There were serious



BOMBAY FORT FROM THE SEA

reasons for this attitude, apart from the desire of its members to keep to themselves a valuable trade. The trouble and expense of securing trading rights in India had been great, and it was fair that the company that paid for them should enjoy them. Agreements and conventions with native courts must be conducted by a corporation, not by individuals; interlopers used the privileges and repudiated the conditions agreed on by the Company. Much of the interloping trade was mere piracy, but the Company was held responsible for its misdeeds. A real source of complaint, however, was the Company's inability to

control its own servants, who by private trade, often of a very doubtful character, made huge fortunes. This the authority seemed powerless to prevent. The irritation at the East India monopoly was so great that a rival company, not confined to London merchants, was formed in 1697. The position, however, proved intolerable, and in 1708 the two companies were amalgamated.

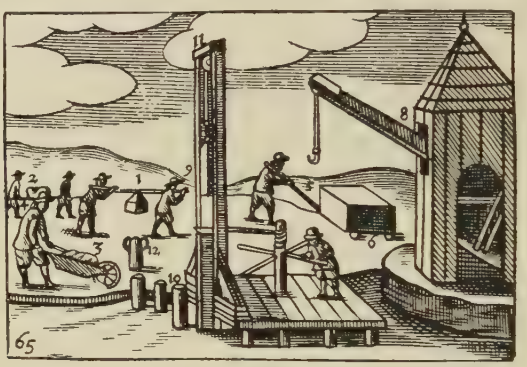
Meanwhile events were turning a merely trading company into

PRINCE OF WALES' FORT, HUDSON BAY

a holder of territorial sovereignty. Power to execute martial law and admiralty jurisdiction in Bombay was already theirs; they kept a small force of soldiers and were allowed to fortify Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. By 1708 the Company had 9 factories in Western India, 3 in Persia, 7 in Southern India, 8 in Bengal. Still, so far there was no idea beyond the protection of their trade, and Portuguese, French, Dutch, and Danes exercised similar privileges and trading rights. In the anarchy that followed the death of Aurungzebe in 1707 and the rise of the Mahratta power the English remained neutral; the ambition

of Dupleix and Clive, not the needs of a trading company, produced that interference with native quarrels that led eventually to our Indian Empire.

African Companies began in 1618 and followed the usual course, but were handicapped by competition of the East India traders, who used their stations and factories. In 1672 a joint-stock company for the African trade was floated, but was not very successful; in 1698 the trade was thrown open. Later the company was threatened with bankruptcy, and in 1730

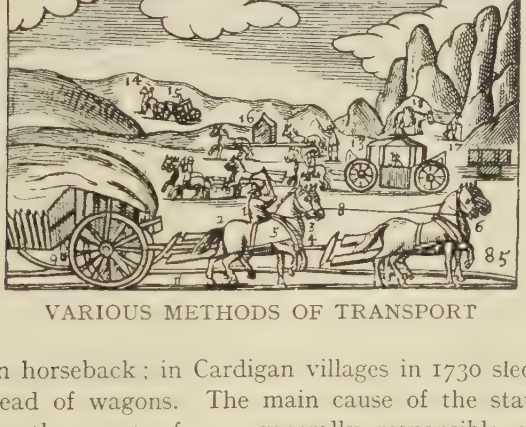


'VARIOUS ENGINES'

a Parliamentary annual grant was made to keep up the trading stations; in 1750 its affairs were wound up.

The Hudson Bay Company was founded in 1670 by two French Huguenots, with Prince Rupert as governor. It was favoured by the government because it was a direct rival to the French, who then held Quebec. The English had the advantage of shipping and used the Hudson Strait instead of the long route overland. After some misfortunes, Hudson Bay was secured to the English by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. In spite of bitter attacks on its unenterprising methods, the company held its own. In dealing with numbers of scattered Indians and half-breed trappers the regulated trade and even the monopoly of a joint-stock company proved best. It held its exclusive rights till 1869.

Transit. At the end of the seventeenth century the roads of England had sunk to a condition that was almost desperate. People travelling by the high roads were quite likely to lose their way. Even in fine weather coaches would stick in the slough till pulled out by teams of oxen. In the winter floods often barred the way for days at a time. A viceroy travelling to Ireland in 1685 took 5 hours to travel the 14 miles between St. Asaph and Conway, and coaches in the Weald were usually drawn by oxen. In the west and south-west everything was



VARIOUS METHODS OF TRANSPORT

carried on horseback; in Cardigan villages in 1730 sledges were used instead of wagons. The main cause of the state of the roads was the want of any generally responsible authority. Each parish was responsible for the part that passed through it, an obvious injustice that was evaded by neglect. An Act was passed in 1675 authorizing turnpikes on a part of the great north road, a system bitterly opposed, but gradually extended to most of the main routes of traffic. It was not till 1773 that an Act was passed providing for the proper upkeep of all roads.

The cost of transit along such roads was enormous and must have seriously interfered with trade. Coal was only conveyed by water, hence its early name of sea-coal. Just at the end of our period the making of canals was started, the first being

that from Worsley to Manchester, 11 miles, built by the enterprise of the Duke of Bridgwater.

The amount of English shipping steadily increased throughout the period. Not only was trade extending so that English exports multiplied in value by six between 1660 and 1750, while the imports remained about the same, but the quantity of English shipping calling at English ports had increased from two-thirds to ten-elevenths of the total. What share in this increase was due to the Navigation Act of 1651, which compelled English trade to be carried only in English ships or in those of the country in which the import was produced, is disputed. The government was not content with this measure only. It encouraged the formation of Fishery Companies to wrest the fisheries from the Dutch, but they were not very successful. This method failing, they fell back on the favourite device of the time, and in 1733 a bounty of 20*s.* per ton was offered on vessels engaged in the whale fishery. In 1704 an Act was passed giving substantial bounties on colonial-made pitch, tar, hemp, masts, and spars. These measures were not, however, very successful. Attempts were also made to secure a reserve of sailors for the fleet and to increase the attractions of the merchant service, while the dangers of the English coast were a little lessened by the beginning of lighthouse building. Some, like the first Eddystone, were built by private enterprise, others by the Trinity House out of levies made on all shipping. Harbours too were cared for, and much quiet improvement went on during the long peace of Walpole's twenty years' administration.

The Beginnings of Insurance. There was a certain amount of insurance of ships in the fifteenth century in southern Europe, and by 1574 there seems to have been a number of people thus engaged in London. After the Restoration we find societies started for fire, and a little later for life, insurance. At first they were private ventures or joint-stock companies, one at least being set up by a woman for insurance on births, marriages, and services, and carried on successfully. Very often they were little more than bogus concerns run by company promoters.

Marine insurances by joint-stock appeared in 1720, when the London Assurance and the Royal Exchange Assurance were founded. The origin of Lloyd's is interesting. Persons connected with shipping were in the habit of meeting at a coffee-house kept by one Edward Lloyd, who also published a paper concerning foreign and commercial news. In 1726 he brought

RUDYERD'S EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE, built in 1708.

out *Lloyd's List*, with shipping news, rates of exchange, &c. Eventually this was taken over by the brokers and underwriters themselves, and in 1774 they settled in premises in the Royal Exchange. They disapproved of life insurance as being speculative and likely to induce abuses, and so to this day marine insurance stands apart from all other.

Comparison between External Trade in 1700, 1750, and 1913. During the period 1700–1750 the external trade of England increased 62 per cent., from over 10½ millions to about 17½ millions. By 1913 it had reached 1,403 millions; it had multiplied 80 times.

Between the same dates the trade per head of the population increased about 60 per cent., for the population was almost stationary; by 1913 the trade per head was 11 times what it was in 1750.

Summary. 1. In manufactures the chief event of the time is the beginning of a transfer of the wool industry from Norwich to Yorkshire. Up to 1750 it was rather an increase in Yorkshire than a decrease in Norfolk that has to be noted. Cotton was discouraged, linen flourished in Scotland, iron manufacture became permanently located in the coal fields.

2. Capitalism increased, the number of pure wage-earners grew greater, and labour began to organize.

3. The regulated and joint-stock companies continued through the period, but after 1689 their exclusiveness was modified, and there was a gradual tendency towards 'open', though still regulated, trade.

4. All through the period transit difficulties were great. The roads had long been neglected and were in a shocking condition. Turnpikes as a remedy proved a failure. Shipping increased steadily and was fostered by the government.

5. Commercial insurance began in the early eighteenth century; speculative at first, it soon established itself solidly as part of our trade system.

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3. Government Policies and Taxation

The outstanding feature of the period was, as we have seen, the control of the government by the landed interest. Not only were the parliaments of the Restoration filled with country squires and cavaliers, but even the element that secured the Revolution of 1688 was largely composed of the same class, and the great Whig families that governed the country for the first half of the eighteenth century had their prosperity securely rooted in the soil. It is true that the financial and commercial classes were equally attached by interest to the Hanoverian

succession, but taking it all round there was probably no period in our history when the English so dearly 'loved a lord', or when the power of the landed aristocracy was so unchallenged. In the Middle Ages their power was at least equalled by that of the Crown and the Church, the Tudor policy had largely passed them by in favour of parvenus from the city or the lesser gentry, the age that followed was to see their gradual replacement by a plutocracy, the sources of whose wealth and power lay not in land but in trade. But for over a century the land and its owners were the first consideration of the government, and the rents arising from it were the test of the nation's prosperity. We have already seen how the Act of Settlement secured for the landholder a reserve of cheap labour which was powerless to defend itself. During the early eighteenth century a succession of good harvests, and a considerable increase in the commerce of the nation kept prices down and work fairly plentiful, but with the coming of the great wars irretrievable disaster threatened the mass of the wage-earning people, tied almost as much to the soil as their ancestors of the fourteenth century.

Protection. Sufficient labour being secured, the next step was to obtain a high remunerative price for the produce of the land. During the Tudor period the growth of London had forced the government control of the corn trade to be subservient to that city's needs, and though export was in law allowed it had not in practice been great. In 1660 not only was export allowed when wheat was below 40*s.* a quarter, but small import duties were imposed on foreign wheat. In 1663 the price below which export was allowed was raised to 48*s.* and the import duty increased to 5*s.* 4*d.* In 1669 import was prohibited in times of plenty. In 1670 all limit on export was removed and the import duty raised to 16*s.* unless home prices rose above 53*s.* 4*d.* In 1673 a fresh experiment was made in the interest of the landowner. A bounty of 5*s.* on wheat and lesser sums on other grains were allowed on all corn exported in English ships, provided the price was not above 48*s.* In 1689 this plan was

revived, and on this combination of bounty on export and duty on import the corn trade was regulated throughout the eighteenth century. The whole idea was to encourage corn-growing by protecting the producer against lowered prices due either to an extraordinarily good season or the import of foreign corn. Only when prices rose to something like famine rates were the import duties largely lowered. To that small extent alone was the interest of the consumer considered.

The import of cattle was also restricted in the interest of the English landowner, for fat cattle from beyond the seas were forbidden, and a blow thus struck at an increasingly prosperous Irish export. The rise in the value of pasture land, noted by Defoe, indicated an increasing attention to this branch of farming.

Policy Regarding Industries and Commerce. The policy of the English government after the Revolution, as to the relative rôles of trade and industry, was a copy of that which Colbert was apparently making so successful in France. The value of each particular trade was gauged by its effect on English industry. Exports were the all-important thing, imports a sort of necessary evil by which we had to be paid for our sales. It was desirable to trade with any country to whom we sold much and from whom we bought little, above all it was undesirable to import goods that should in any way rival our own productions. This theory of economics fitted in well with post-Revolution politics. For more than a century English statesmen lived in real terror of the power of France. Should we then help her power by offering a market for her manufactures and so increase her wealth and prejudice our own output? When Colbert in 1667 prohibited English cloth from entering France, an agitation began for the cessation of all trade with France, and in 1678 an Act to that effect was passed. The policy was more or less maintained for the next century.

This fear and jealousy of France is well illustrated in the history of two treaties, the METHUEN TREATY of 1703 with Portugal, and the commercial clauses of the TREATY OF UTRECHT

in 1713. The import trade with France was mainly in wines, brandies and silks; that with Portugal largely wines. To France we exported certain cloth made of Spanish wool, but not much else; Portugal was a large market for our cloth. In 1703 this market was threatened by the beginnings of a cloth manufacture in Portugal, started in 1680 by an enterprising Irishman. To protect this infant industry the Portuguese had prohibited the importation of all English cloth. Methuen was sent out to negotiate for the removal of the embargo. In return for free admittance of English cloth to Portugal, he promised that Portuguese wines should be admitted to England at two-thirds the duty payable on French wines. From this time the drinking of port was regarded as a patriotic duty by the English squire. Since, however, Portugal took more cloth than even our three-bottle ancestors could consume in wine, a large quantity of bullion flowed into England from the Portuguese trade, and according to the ideas of the time this was eminently satisfactory. Not even the large smuggling trade that grew up between France and England disturbed the satisfaction.

But ten years later there was a growing feeling among certain sections of the community that barriers put on trade were not in the long run good for the nation, and at the Treaty of Utrecht Bolingbroke made an agreement with France to revert to the custom of 1664, when French goods were admitted to England on the same terms as those of any other nation, the tariff on English imports to France to remain as they had been at the same date. Immediately it became evident that the commercial classes held rigidly to the current theories. The silk manufacturers would be ruined, the woollen industry seriously injured, the linen manufacture stifled. To break the Methuen treaty would lose the Portuguese cloth market and the French trade would drain the country of bullion. The controversy was bitter; the defenders of the new treaty did not challenge the theory of the balance of trade, but they did advance two important points, that trade was desirable with as many peoples and markets as possible, that political aims should not be mixed up with economic

ones. In the words of the pamphleteer, 'The language of nations to one another is, "I let thee gain by me, that I may gain by thee . . ." To bar up trade with a nation, because we differ in state matters and political interests, is the greatest absurdity that a nation can be guilty of.' But the majority thought otherwise, and the commercial clauses of the treaty were not confirmed by Parliament.

In the story of these treaties the domination of the woollen interest is clear. Parliament even introduced sumptuary laws to protect it, forbidding, for instance, the use of silk instead of serge for buttonholes in 1738, and fining those who wore French cambric or lawn in 1745.

The East India Company too suffered from criticism on exactly the same grounds. The attack was not so much now on account of its export of silver, as for its import of textiles. Indian muslins and silks were becoming the fashion and were thought to be damaging the home producer. The order of argument used is interesting. The products of Indian cheap labour ousted the work of English craftsmen, this in turn would lessen the demand for English wool and thus damage the rents of the landowners. It is obvious in whose hands the final decision lay. In 1700 certain scheduled East India goods had to be re-exported and were not allowed to be sold in the country.

Such being the policy of the predominant parties, it only remains to note the means they adopted for the encouragement of industry. The principal one has already been mentioned in the case of agriculture; bounties were not confined to corn but were offered for any new or feeble industry. Some have been mentioned, such as those on boats for the whale fishery, on hemp and naval stores manufactured in the colonies. Others were on the building of big ships, on silk, &c. Bounties for new industries, high tariffs to keep out rivals of both old and new, these seemed to eighteenth-century English statesmen their obvious duty. That the articles produced by industries so artificially bolstered up must be unduly dear and that the consumer paid unnecessarily heavily for everything he required

did not apparently trouble them, even if they ever reflected on the subject.

Parliament Replaces the Privy Council. It will have become evident that the constitutional method of economic control had completely changed. Under Elizabeth Parliament passed general regulations and left the government to carry out the details. We saw how an efficient Privy Council carried state control into every nook and cranny of the realm. After 1660 the Privy Council ceased to rule in home politics. Parliament assumed the right not merely to legislate but also to control administration, and from the point of view of industry there is no question that it was the less efficient instrument. It was too clumsy, too slow to move, too much affected by popular passion and sentiment to carry out so delicate a task. Above all, in the clash of warring interests it was too much exposed to the temptations of bribery. The corruption of public life in the eighteenth century was on something the same scale as that of the later Roman Republic, an octopus whose tentacles embraced the whole body politic. Only a highly trained professional body of officials, free to act and alter from day to day, can carry out successfully a minute control of industry; under the looser parliamentary control evasion of the law was rife. It is not surprising that the dominant figures in the popular imagination of the eighteenth century are the smuggler and the highwayman.

The Relief of Poverty. The careful administration of the Poor Law of 1601 ceased with the downfall of the monarchy, while the Civil War naturally increased the vagrant class. We have already noticed the abuses that led to the Act of Settlement of 1662 and the still worse evils that followed in its train. The increased industry of the country did not succeed in employing the bulk of the casual and squatter class; the progress of enclosures, though slow, still threw out of regular employment a considerable number of agricultural labourers; and during the period 1660–1723 the poor-rate rose continuously. Many remedies were proposed, all based on the idea of setting the pauper to work, but it was not easy. Agriculture did not need

him, the growing organization of industry demanded a skill he did not possess, and often no doubt he was work-shy and preferred a meagre but easy existence as a squatter on the waste. It is difficult to judge how far in the eighteenth century idleness was really the cause of poverty, for the bitter invectives on the subject come from men who thought a labourer and his family idle who did not work from sunrise to sunset, and believed it to be of national advantage that little children of four years of age should earn their keep. This too in an age when the men of the well-to-do classes did less work of value to themselves or any one else than at any period of our history. One inevitably suspects that class feeling rather than moral indignation is at the back of their strictures. Attempts to find work for the pauper were made all over the country at different times, and in 1723 an Act was passed empowering every parish to build a workhouse for this purpose. The plan adopted in most places was to farm out the poor to a contractor, who was either paid a lump sum for the job, in which case he made it his business to admit as few people as possible and with that object made the place so intolerable as to induce people to starve on the merest pittance rather than enter it ; or he was allowed so much per head plus the value of their work, in which case he desired to admit many and overwork them. It is hardly possible to suppose that consideration for the poor was at the back of a plan which put a premium on their oppression, and we must look to the other aspect of the poor law for the cause. The poor rate had become very large and was a heavy drain on the poorer farmers, so the one idea of the overseers of the poor was to keep down the rates. In this, after 1723, they were very successful, and contemporaries quoted the dwindling poor rate as proof of national prosperity ; it was much more a sign of increasing brutality and material selfishness.

Colonial Policy. The idea that the welfare of the colonies should be entirely subservient to that of the mother country persisted for another century. The English traders had no

intention of sharing their European markets with the emigrants across the sea or even with the sister kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland. By means of the Navigation Act they forced the colonists to buy what they needed from England only, and to carry all they wished to sell to English ports first for distribution. The interference was mainly with the trade of the Southern States of Virginia and Carolina and of the West Indies. The West Indies received more attention than any other colony; these

islands traded with New England as well as with the home country and carried on a lucrative but illicit commerce with Spanish and Portuguese America. New England suffered from the anti-French policy of the home government, and the attempts to prevent their trade with the French plantations were greatly resented. The French Newfoundland fisheries enabled the New England colonists to buy considerable quantities of French wines, brandies, and other goods; several of the West Indies were in French hands, and the northern colonists saw no reason for confining their trade to the English islands. Attempts to discourage the trade failed, and the English government was still

further annoyed by the colonists supplying French plantations with food during the war. It is not surprising that friction was constant. From the point of view of the home government the colonists were a dangerous potential rival to English industry and trade, from that of the colonists the selfish interference of a parliament in which they had no voice was far more galling than any former control by the Crown. To the English parliament there seemed yet another danger: prosperous colonies might prove a source of power to a would-be autocratic monarch. This was especially the case with Scotland and Ireland. In Scotland the Darien Scheme brought matters to a head. By this it was proposed to establish a settlement capable of making war and foreign agreements, besides which it was to possess a free port, in distinct opposition to the English navigation policy. There was some possibility that it might interfere with the monopoly of the East India Company. Although the scheme failed, the English authorities realized that the only way to avoid such rivalry was by the parliamentary union of the two countries. This was accomplished in 1707; Scotland made a good bargain in the business and prospered considerably.

But Ireland was much more injured by the English policy than either the American colonies or Scotland. The navigation policy stopped her trade with the Continent, her industries were penalized continually to make way for those of England, worst of all the corn policy kept her from any progress in tillage. By the help of bounties English corn could be sold in Dublin cheaper than Irish corn could be grown. To save the English forests the import of Irish bar-iron and even of Irish timber was encouraged. Irish cattle and Irish wool were, on the other hand, discouraged by legislation in the interest of the English farmer of pasture land; it was a suicidal policy—Irish wool was smuggled to the Continent and fed the very industries that rivalled ours most surely, and Irish victuals went to supply French and Dutch ships. Finally, nothing was done to facilitate any industry, agricultural or other, that might attract capital to the sister isle.

A few words must be said on one of the most lucrative trades of the eighteenth century, that in West African slaves. It was of enormous extent, a moderate estimate being an average of 20,000 a year between 1680 and 1786. In 1771 there were 190 English ships engaged in it. It was believed at the time that it benefited England, in that slave plantations prevented the colonists becoming self-sufficing communities independent of the mother country. This belief in what we should now regard as a dubious advantage was not balanced by any humanitarian considerations. This is hardly surprising in an age that hanged children for theft and regarded the labourer as little more than a beast of burden. That peculiar turn of mind that sees subjects for compassion in the oppressed of far-away lands, from Armenia to the Pacific, while it shuts its eyes to the misery and tyranny at its own gates, was not a product of the eighteenth century. That sceptical age was frankly selfish and entirely self-satisfied. Negro slaves were merely so much profitable merchandise.

Banking. The National Debt. Perhaps the most far-reaching event in the economic history of the time was the foundation of the BANK OF ENGLAND in 1694. Governments had always borrowed money, especially in war time, frequently on the security of parts of the anticipated royal income. The Bank of England was founded as a sort of monopolist in the business. A sum of £1,200,000 was subscribed by certain people, who formed a company; this was lent to the government, who, in return, guaranteed an annual interest of £100,000, but did not undertake to repay the principal. The bank was to carry on ordinary banking business; that is, it received money on deposit and lent it out at interest. This had already been done by the goldsmiths; the new departure of the bank was that it lent in the form of bills or notes, not gold but paper. This it could safely do because of the £100,000 regular income it held in the interest paid by government. Consequently it could, in a sense, lend more money than it actually possessed. At first this new idea of circulating credit was viewed with some suspicion, but

when it was found that the government would accept these notes, as well as bills on the exchequer which bore interest, in payment of taxes, the plan of trading with paper money was accepted and found to be useful. It really amounted to this: the bank lent out, not gold, but a promise to pay gold on demand; A, who borrowed this promise, paid B with it instead of in coins, B passed it on to C, and so on. Eventually it got back to the bank, who did actually hand out gold for it, but as only a part of the notes came in at once, the bank, secure in the annual interest due from the government, could be sure of paying that much. The effect of this system of credit on commerce was at first very uncertain. The breakdown of the monopolies of the regulated companies produced the wildest speculation, and the bank had to learn by experience when to lend and when to refuse, but it did learn in time, and during the first years the government helped it through one or two crises. This foundation of the Bank of England, which we may note is all through merely a private company, is the beginning of our National Debt, a steadily increasing sum of money borrowed from a large section of the nation on which the whole nation has to pay the interest. Walpole initiated a Sinking Fund, i.e. an allocation of certain sums from each year's income to pay off part of the debt, but the fund was rarely kept intact. It is now the policy in time of peace to pay off sums continuously, but each successive war adds to the debt on which succeeding generations continue to pay the interest.

Whether the new scheme of trading and governing by credit was a good one has been disputed; one certainly good effect it had at the time, it tied the moneyed interest to the settlement of the Revolution. The return of the Stuarts would mean a certain repudiation of the large debt incurred by the 'usurping' government, and it was therefore to the interest of all who had lent the money to keep their debtors in power. In the days of not very popular German princes on the English throne, this was an important factor in the struggle.

Two years later, in 1696, the government took in hand

the much needed work of re-coining. The condition of the coinage was not due to debasement, as had been the case in the sixteenth century, but to the bad wearing capacity of the coins. Up to 1663 all coins had been hammered, and they varied considerably in size and weight. At that date the mill and press were introduced and new coins issued. The old ones had deteriorated by constant clipping, easy to do when the edges were smooth and the weights irregular, consequently new coins were hoarded and even melted down, while the old got worse and worse and the quantity in circulation less. The worn coins were easily imitated, and there was much false money about. Prices for goods paid in silver rose as the coins got worse and the bad exchange abroad made the payments of the army difficult. In 1696 Sir Isaac Newton was put in charge of a recoinage, which was effected in two years at a cost to the government of £2,400,000. The benefit obtained by the foreign exchange somewhat balanced this amount.

THE BANK OF ENGLAND. The original building.

Taxation. During the Civil War and period of the Commonwealth several experiments in taxation had been made. The property tax had been collected from the occupier, who could deduct it afterwards from his rent; this had been done during the war, owing to the numerous absentees among the landlords. A proper assessment had been made, so that the tax was more

fairly distributed. Lastly, at the instance of Pym, a tax known as an EXCISE was copied from the Dutch. This was a duty on certain things consumed within the country; it got its name from the idea that it was an 'excision' of part of the article. It was for a long time a most unpopular form of taxation and bitterly opposed, especially on such things as flesh and salt. When, however, those on the actual necessaries of life were removed, men settled down into accepting it.

When in 1660 the monarchy was restored, many of the expedients of the parliamentary party were revived. We have already seen how the landed interest got rid of their feudal rents, and the £100,000 thus lost to the king was eventually restored to him, after considerable discussion, by an excise on beer, ale, and other liquors granted to the king and his heirs. This was called the hereditary excise, and the act granting it is still on the statute book. A similar grant was given the king for life. Customs were also granted of 5 per cent., with a tunnage on wine. The question of the demesne lands came up; they had been largely alienated by the kings, although, strictly speaking, the 'ancient demesne' of Edward the Confessor was regarded as national not royal property. There was not a great deal left by 1640 and that little the Parliament sold; some was eventually restored, but by 1663 its revenue was only £100,000. At the present day the crown lands are only worth £500,000, which is about the same.

During the reign of Charles II a Hearth Tax of 2*s.* on every hearth, except in cottages, was introduced. For special needs, such as war, recourse was had to a poll-tax, or the old Tudor subsidy. Altogether the regular peace revenue was estimated at £1,200,000.

At the Revolution then the principal taxes in existence were

Direct Tax. Hearth Tax.

Indirect Taxes. Customs. Five per cent. on goods imported or exported, tunnage on wine, duty on woollen cloth and special duties levied in 1685.

Excise. The Hereditary and the Temporary Excise.

On the accession of William and Mary one great change was made in granting the customs for a term of years, instead of for life, the object being to make government without parliament impossible. For extraordinary occasions poll taxes were granted, but though these were quick to collect there was an enormous number of evasions; the last collected was in 1698. From 1695 to 1706 a curious plan was tried of taxing births, marriages

ENGLISH HATRED OF EXCISE. Cartoon showing the Lion and the Unicorn yoked to a beer-barrel.

and funerals, bachelors and widows. For the Hearth Tax was substituted a tax on houses with more than a certain number of windows. In 1694 the first stamp duties were imposed on legal documents and law proceedings. Lastly, a property tax was levied, which, owing to difficulties of collection, ended by becoming merely a land tax, and, like the old tenths and fifteenths of the Middle Ages, to mean a certain sum collected according to the assessment of 1692. Thus a rate of 1s. was taken to mean half a million apportioned as usual. The tax lasted till 1798,

when it was converted by Pitt into a perpetual rent charge, redeemable by the payers.

From this time to the end of the Seven Years War the taxation of the country increased considerably, but there were no striking departures into new fields of revenue. Walpole tried to facilitate trade by removing many of the restrictions; he removed export duties from 106 articles manufactured in Britain and import duties on raw materials, drugs and naval stores. But when he tried to go further he was met by bitter opposition. His idea was to make London a free port, to remove all restrictions on trade carrying produce from one foreign port to another but calling at London en route. He proposed to remove duties on foreign imports which were re-exported and to substitute an excise on those consumed in the country. He succeeded only in the case of tea, coffee, and chocolate which were kept in bonded warehouses and paid duty when released from them for home consumption. When he tried to extend the plan he failed. Had he succeeded the trade of London might have doubled, and the new method of collecting by excise instead of customs would have secured to the revenue the enormous sum lost by smuggling and enabled him to lighten the land tax. This latter he did actually reduce to 1*s.*, while he lowered the rate of government loans from 8 and 6 to 4 per cent.

But the problem of the eighteenth century was where to find money for its wars. The increasing trade of the country helped, of course, by raising the value of the customs, and the land tax ranged from 1*s.* to 4*s.* according to need, but by 1763 men were seriously concerned at the near approach to the taxable limit that the nation would stand, and Grenville summed up the prevailing feeling when he defended a fresh tax by the pathetic demand to be told *where* he was to find a fresh source. That Pitt the elder was heard to hum the tune of a popular song beginning 'Gentle Shepherd, tell me where?' gave Grenville the nickname of 'Gentle Shepherd', but did not solve the problem. That was to be the work of Pitt's son, but meanwhile Grenville, in an evil hour, bethought him of the colonies and

plantations and so lost us the finest of them. It was mainly this difficulty of finding fresh sources of revenue that turned him to the American colonies for possible taxes and brought about the resulting 'Boston tea-party'.

The following table of the cost of the wars between 1688 and 1763 will give some measure of the difficulty. Nearly half of the cost was met by borrowing and the interest on the National Debt became a heavy item in the annual budget.

COST OF THE WARS, 1688–1763

Date.	*Cost.*	*Addition to National Debt.*
	£	£
1688–97 . . .	32,600,000	14½ million
1702–13 . . .	50,700,000	21½ „
1718–21 . . .	4,500,000	
1739–48 . . .	43,600,000	29 „
1756–63 . . .	82,600,000	59½ „

In 1755 the revenue was about 6½ millions, of which 80 per cent. was derived by indirect taxation from customs and excise. The following table shows how differently modern taxation is distributed:

	1755.	1914–15.
Total . . .	6½ millions	226 millions
Customs and Excise .	80 per cent. of total	43 per cent. of total
Land Tax . .	14·6 „ „	·3 „ „
Stamp Duties . .	2 „ „	3½ „ „
Estate Duties, &c. .		14 „ „
Income Tax . .		36 „ „

Summary. 1. During this period the landed aristocracy controlled the machinery of government. Their policy was one of protection for the agricultural interest, which they secured by a combination of bounties on exported and duties on imported produce, especially corn.

2. Commercially the policy was to do everything possible to weaken French trade, and to discourage all intercourse between the two nations. Apart from this political object, trade was viewed solely in its relation to our own industries; such as encouraged our own manufactures was facilitated, others dis-

countenanced or even prohibited. Bounties and high tariffs were the means employed.

3. The poverty problem had not been solved in the early seventeenth century, though it was now no longer an acute menace. A certain stiffening of the conditions of poor relief after 1723 reduced the rate, if not the poverty.

4. The old colonial system was based on the theory that the interests of the colonies must be entirely subordinated to those of England. This led to considerable friction with those overseas and to the ruin or prevention of Irish industry and prosperity.

5. The eighteenth century saw the growth of a National Debt and a system of government by credit. In taxation the burden passed from the landowner to the payer of indirect taxes. Excises were introduced, also Stamp Duties and a Hearth Tax that became a Window Tax. A property tax of 1s. came eventually to be levied on land only, but in 1755 only 14 per cent. of the total taxation was on land, the rest was all ' indirect ', chiefly customs and excise. During a period of 75 years 40 years of war added 124 millions to our National Debt.

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BOOK II

From the Middle of the Eighteenth Century to 1874

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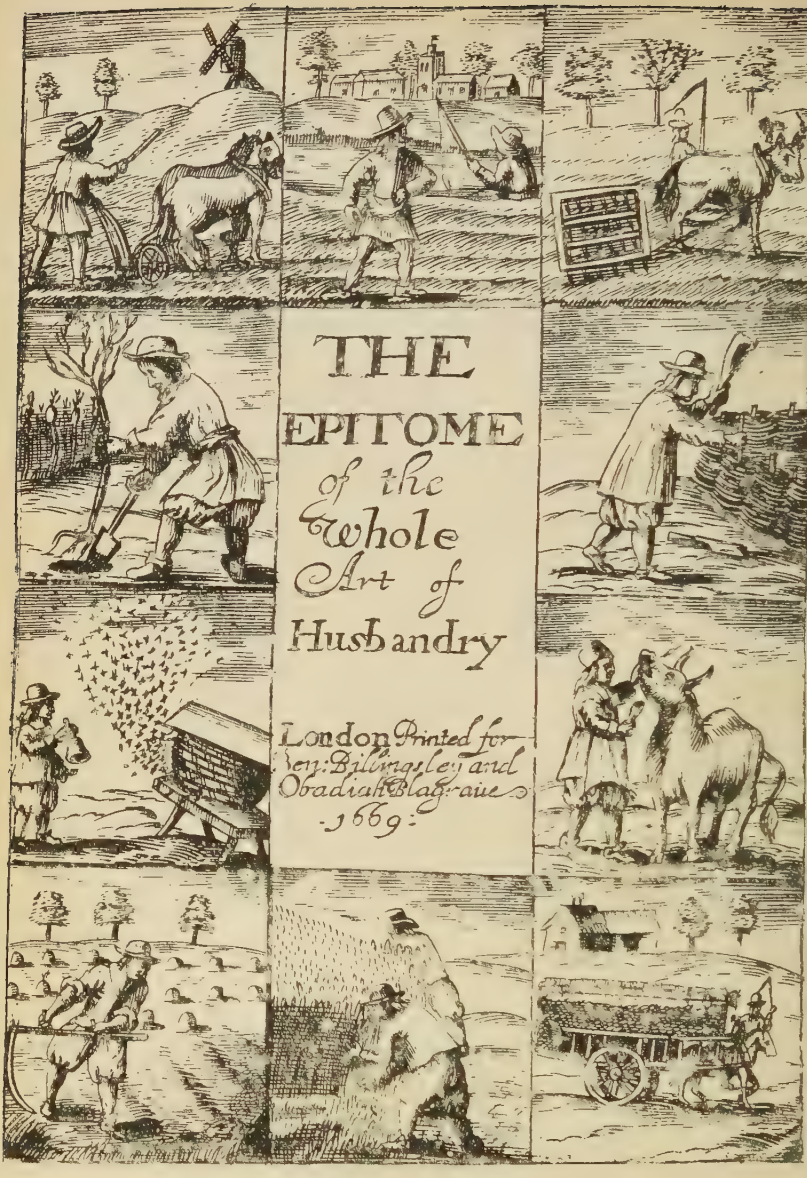


THE TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE

PART VI. 1750–1834

1. The Agrarian Revolution

In 1750, in spite of the many enclosures of all kinds that had been made since the fifteenth century, the characteristic village of middle and southern England was still an open-field one, not differing fundamentally from those of the Middle Ages. By 1833 the type survived in ever dwindling numbers, and the modern system of consolidated farms mostly held by tenant farmers was firmly established throughout the country. In the course of these eighty-three years not only the face of England but its whole social structure was revolutionized.

Enclosures. The cause of the revolution was the sudden speeding up of the enclosure movement. As we have seen, enclosures had never absolutely ceased since the wool demand of the fifteenth century had started them, but their extent, frequency, and objective had altered with altering determining forces. Those of the period we are about to consider were the direct result of the movement for high farming, the initial stages of which were dealt with in Part V. The rapid rate of the enclosures of our period can be estimated from such figures as these, that during the reign of George III there were passed 3,554 Acts of Enclosure dealing with $5\frac{1}{2}$ million acres. The area dealt with lay chiefly in the Midlands, in Norfolk, and in Wales; in the Home Counties there were few enclosures, in Devon and Cornwall none.

There were three kinds of land that could be enclosed, the common-fields, the commons, and the wastes. How did a lord of the manor who wished to enclose his land proceed in the eighteenth century? Where he held a large portion of the

village and was able by careful adjustments of his leases to secure a large fraction of the common-fields at his disposal at the same moment, he might, and sometimes did, secure enclosure by mutual agreement with the other holders. In normal cases, however, this was not so easy, especially if he wished to break up the commons as well as the common-fields. He, therefore, in conjunction with perhaps the next largest holder in the village and with the holder of the tithes, promoted a Bill in Parliament. Until 1774 he was under no obligation to tell the other landholders what he was doing, though after that date notices had to be posted on the church on three Sundays in August or September. Parliament then granted leave to bring in the Bill, and after the second reading a committee, selected by the promoter of the Bill, was nominated to deal with it. At this point petitions might be received against the Bill, but unless the opposition included some large landowner, little notice was taken of them. The consent of three-quarters or four-fifths of those interested was necessary, but the basis of the fraction was property value, not number of people, and as the property already enclosed was included in the total, evidently the lord of the manor could usually dominate the situation.

The Bill having passed, commissioners proceeded to the village to divide up the land. The Act had probably provided that a certain amount of the land should go to the lord of the manor, to the holder of the tithes, and sometimes a small allotment to the poor; the rest was divided among the yeomen and the copyholders in proportion to their holdings. Obviously, much depended on the character of the commissioners, and their nomination was usually in the hands of the promoter of the Act. Up to 1801, one of them might even be the lord's bailiff. Claims had to be sent in writing and precisely stated—the bulk of the peasantry not being able to read or write. After the land had been allocated the owners were obliged to fence or hedge their new holding, and to pay their proportionate cost of the expenses of the whole affair. Obviously, such a system was open to all kinds of abuses, some of which Parliament tried to

OPEN FIELDS and strip cultivation still surviving at Epworth in Lincolnshire

remedy by Standing Orders, such as the church notice already mentioned, and others exercising some control over the extortions of commissioners. Attempts to bring in a General Enclosure Act regulating the business failed, even though backed by the newly-created Board of Agriculture, and all efforts to secure some consideration for the poorer tenants and cottagers were ruthlessly resisted. Not till 1836, when it was practically too late, was anything done. The vested interests of lawyers, commissioners, and parliamentary officials were too powerful. For Enclosure Acts proved a gold mine to these classes, and the costs became preposterous, sometimes amounting to more than the capital value of the land concerned.

What were the reasons advanced for the change? The principal one was the inefficiency of open-field farming and the increased production that could be got from enclosed land by the new and more scientific methods. There is no question that open-field tillage was very poor. The charges brought against it in the sixteenth century [1] were still true, while the relative efficiency of the best farming on enclosed lands was much higher. The descriptions of Arthur Young, though we must discount them somewhat as coming from a passionate propagandist of the new agriculture, are convincing as to the desperate condition of many of the open fields, and are endorsed by other writers with less bias. Ellis, in 1773, said that the farmers of the Vale of Aylesbury reaped bushels where they should reap quarters, and in Buckinghamshire and Northampton manure was used for fuel and for buildings instead of on the land. Marshall describes lands near Gloucester where he 'found beans hidden among mustard growing wild as a weed; peas choked by poppies and corn-marigolds; every stem of barley fettered with convolvulus; wheat pining in thickets of couch and thistle. It is not surprising that the yield of wheat was anything from eighteen bushels an acre down to twelve or eight bushels.' [2] All open-field farming was not as bad as this, and an enlightened village might adopt many of the new methods, and some did.

[1] See p. 180.

[2] Prothero, *English Farming*, p. 199.

But winter crops could not be grown on lands over which pasture rights existed from August to February, and the difficulties of draining and weeding were almost insuperable in the commingled strips.

On the other hand, enclosures would facilitate modern methods, and even the engrossing of farms and the squeezing out of the small occupier would, in Arthur Young's opinion, be justified by the enormously increased production.

'Where', he asks, 'is the little farmer to be found who will cover his whole farm with marl at the rate of 100 to 150 tons per acre? Who will drain all his land at the expense of £2 or £3 an acre? Who will pay a heavy price for the manure of towns and convey it 30 miles by land carriage? Who will float his meadows at the expense of £5 an acre?' Obviously the argument is unanswerable; the new farming was capitalist farming, the day of the self-sufficing village was past. Young claimed that more produce meant higher rents for landlords, more profits for farmers, higher wages, and more food. Let us see how far his prophecies were fulfilled.

The effects of enclosures may conveniently be regarded from three points of view, according as they concerned production, rents, or people. The first result was to increase the total area cultivated. Much of the commons was good land, well worth turning into arable, while the best land of the common-fields was often used as pasturage for the production of better cattle. A considerable part of the wastes that were enclosed was used to raise crops, which the high prices that ruled during the Napoleonic wars made worth raising. While the gross product of any given village after enclosure was often less than it had been before, especially where arable was turned to grass,[1] there is no question that as a whole the produce of the country was greatly increased. It was not so much that enclosures necessarily produced more as that enclosures were a necessary preliminary to any practice of the new farming, which aimed at

[1] A case is given by Dr. Slater of a parish of 2,000 acres which produced £4,000 before enclosure and £2,600 after.

and secured much greater results per acre. The advocates of enclosures maintained that tenant farming, which certainly increased as enclosures became general, also tended towards high farming. For the landlord could and did force his tenants to adopt the new methods by forcing up rents to a level which could only be paid by abandoning the old routine. Young

COURSING.

ON account of the improvements of agriculture, the increasing price of all the articles of life, with the increasing taxes, few princely fortunes can compass the maintenance of a pack of hounds, and the pleasures of the chace must be proportionably diminished. As inclosures proceed, the great fox covers of the country will disappear; and many staunch fox-hunters lament, that they may be "*in at the death*" of that sport. In consequence of these resolutions in the sporting world, greyhound-coursing seems to be adopted in several parts of the kingdom, & to be carried on with a spirit of enthusiasm by many gentlemen of consequence. The following account of celebrated greyhounds, matches, &c. depending, is extracted from "The YORK HERALD"—a paper, though not destitute of any information that can satisfy the political, polite, or commercial world, pays particular attention to the authenticity of its sporting intelligence, so essentially requisite in that part of the kingdom, and which may not prove altogether uninteresting to some of our readers.

Newspaper cutting of August 1801. *Enclosure was proceeding at such a pace that even sportsmen were disturbed.*

even went so far as to claim that the absentee landowner, gambling on his ancestral acres at Brooks's, was a benefactor to agriculture, since he had to raise rents to pay his debts of honour.

There is no question that enclosures did raise rents. In the first place the costs of enclosure were so great that only by higher rents could the outlay be recouped. Often they were doubled and even quadrupled. Where rich arable land was

turned to pasture the rise in rent would be considerable. The parish of 2,000 acres mentioned above, though its produce dropped 35 per cent., rose in rental value 63½ per cent., from £1,100 to £1,800. The saving in labour gave increased profits. Rents depended not on gross produce but on net profit, i.e. the amount that went to feed the industrial population of the towns. Enclosures tended to reduce the numbers of the rural workers and increase those of the towns. The same amount of food produced by fewer hands would cost less to produce, the profits would increase, and hence the landlords could exact more rent. The bringing into tillage of poorer lands raised the relative value of good land and so rents rose from this cause also.

Production and rents then were increased, it remains to inquire what were the effects on the inhabitants of the land. We may perhaps briefly summarize them thus: the squires, the parsons, the lawyers, and the large tenant farmers benefited considerably, the small yeoman, copyholders, and tenants were pushed to the verge of ruin and gradually disappeared, the cottagers and labourers were either driven from the rural districts altogether or remained as sweated wage-earners, a landless proletariate. Let us see how this came about. We must take up the story at the point where the commissioners have done their division, and nothing is left for the village but to reorganize itself on the new basis. The lord, we may be sure, has got full equivalent for all his land and a large part of the commons; the tithe-owner, parson or lay impropriator, has been secured carefully by the Act; the freeholders have established their claims comparatively easily; the copyholders have had more difficulty, especially in securing any claims they may put forward for compensation for the loss of common rights; but the cottager, with no acres in the common-field and very dubious rights of common, has obtained nothing. Even if he can establish his common rights, they are not his, but belong to the owner of the cottage of which he is only the tenant, and the owner, not the cottager, secures the compensation. The next step is that all these classes are now faced with the problem of how to fence

or hedge their new holdings, for the Act compels them to do this within a certain time, as well as to pay their share of the cost of enclosure. The larger freeholders and copyholders can probably meet these two expenses by selling part of their stock, and may after a few years recover the outlay by improved methods of farming on the new holdings. Frequently they borrow money, for the new farming demands large capital, and the bankers flourish. But the smaller men cannot possibly face the expense, and sell their land rather than meet it; they rapidly sink to the level of day-labourers. The small farmer disappears from the land.

The cottager was in even a worse plight; his commons were taken away and his cow must follow. Though he was a day-labourer, he had not up till now been entirely dependent on his wage; a cow or two, chickens, pigs, and geese helped out his scanty earnings, giving him milk for his children, and butter, cheese, and eggs to sell, and bacon to help him through the winter. He lost, too, his fuel which he had always drawn from the common. The scientific reformers of agriculture might pour scorn on his miserable cow and his paltry chickens, but to the labourer they made life worth living, they even held the possibility of thrift and hope of advancement; enclosures gave us fat beasts but they also gave us hopeless men. The Reporter of 1807 was of opinion that 'If it could even be proved that some cottagers were deprived of a few trifling advantages, yet the small losses of individuals ought not to stand in the way of certain improvements on a large scale'. Arthur Young, keen advocate of enclosures as he was, saw more truly the effects of the methods by which they were carried out, when in 1801 he wrote: 'By nineteen enclosure acts out of twenty the poor are injured, in some grossly injured. . . . The poor in these parishes may say with truth, "Parliament may be tender of property; all I know is I had a cow and an Act of Parliament has taken it from me."' Henceforth the agricultural labourer has nothing to depend on but his daily wage. Even so, if he could be secure of employment he might at least live; but the new farming

often meant less labour, invariably so where pasture replaced arable. Counties like Leicester, now the 'grass country', were before the enclosures almost entirely open arable fields. Whole villages were depopulated, and even where this did not happen the supply of labour exceeded the demand and enabled the farmers to beat down wages. At the same time the hopelessness of outlook for the worker, who could no longer look forward to securing by thrift a small farm, made early marriages common and the birth-rate rose rapidly. And the demands of the factories for labour were now drawing away the hopeless proletariate to the mushroom towns, and the depopulation of the countryside went swiftly on.

The misery that followed enclosures is often attributed by contemporary writers to the laziness and drunkenness of the workers; they treat

'as its causes, changes that were really its consequences. They note the increase of drunkenness but forget that the occupation of the labourer's idle moments was gone; they attack the mischievous practice of giving children tea, but forget that milk was no longer procurable; they condemn the rising generation as incapable for farm labour, but forget that the parents no longer occupy land on which their children could learn to work; they deplore the helplessness of modern wives of cottagers who had become dependent on the village baker, but forget they were now obliged to buy flour and had lost their free fuel; they denounce their improvident marriages, but forget that the motive of thrift was removed.'[1]

As Arthur Young vividly argues: 'Go to an ale-house kitchen of an old enclosed country, and there you will see the origin of poverty and the poor-rates. For whom are they to be sober? For whom are they to save? For the parish? If I am diligent, shall I have leave to build a cottage? If I am sober, shall I have land for a cow? If I am frugal, shall I have half an acre of potatoes? You offer no motives, you have nothing but a parish officer and a workhouse. Bring me another pot.' In

[1] Prothero, *English Farming*, p. 307.

spite, however, of all protest the degradation went on, and, as Goldsmith foresaw :

> A bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

Improved Methods of Farming. What then was the new agriculture in whose interest the social structure of England was overturned ? First came methods of improving the land. Marling was revived, new crops were introduced, swedes, mangold-wurzel, kohl-rabi, &c., and with these came the possibility of increased live stock, and hence more manure. New implements followed, better ploughs, drills, reaping, mowing, and winnowing machines, horse rakes, scarifiers, chaff-cutters, and turnip-slicers. In 1784 the invention of the threshing machine displaced much labour. But the greatest revolution was in stock-breeding. The pioneer of this branch was Robert Bakewell (1725–95). Up to 1750 the value of sheep had lain in their wool and their manure, of cattle in their milk and their powers of draught. Little or no attempt was made to establish pure breeds or to breed for special points. Long legs and size of bone were assets in a country of bottomless mud-tracks, of ploughing by oxen, and a population that lived mainly on bread. Bakewell set out to produce animals that weighed heaviest in the prime joints, were small-boned, and fattened early. The moment was opportune, for the growing population of the towns demanded meat. His plan was to breed in and in from the finest specimens only. He was most successful with sheep. Out of the two existing classes of Warwickshire and Leicester sheep, of the latter of which Marshall, in 1784, wrote that 'a naturalist would have found some difficulty in classifying him —a something between a sheep and a goat', Bakewell created his new Leicesters, small of bone and fattening early, hardy alive and heavy when dead. Other farmers followed his lead, and breeds pre-eminent for different points were soon created. Bakewell tried also with cattle, and, though his personal success was not so great, he gave the impetus and others established

SALE OF CATTLE.

The ſale of the capital ſtock of bulls and cows, the property of the late Mr. Robert Fowler, commenced on Tueſday laſt, at Little Rollright, in the county of Oxford; and it was ſuppoſed that five thouſand perſons attended, and many of them from diſtant counties. We have been favoured with the following particulars:

A bull, called Garrick, five years old, ſold for 205gs.
A ditto, called Sultan, two years old, for 210gs.
A ditto, Waſhington, two years old, for 205gs.
A ditto, ——, one year old, for 150gs.
A ditto, ——, one year old, for 180gs.
Two ditto, ——, one year old each, for 200gs.
A cow, Brindled Beauty, in calf, for 260gs.
A ditto, Waſhington's mother, in calf, 185gs.
A ditto, Garrick's ſiſter, in calf, 115gs.
A ditto, Long-horned Nancy, in calf, 105gs.
A ditto, Young Nell, 120gs.
A ditto, Spotted Nancy, 80gs.
A ditto, red, 75gs.
A heifer, black, three years old, 135gs.
A ditto, Young Brindled Beauty, two years old, 63gs.
A ditto, Nell's White Back, two years old, 85gs.
A calf, three or four months old, 30gs.

The amount of the firſt day's ſale was 3,427l. 4s.

THE RISE OF THE STOCK-BREEDER. A newspaper cutting of April 1791 and a picture of the long horn bull 'Garrick'

different breeds; the formation of herds of Durham Shorthorns, Herefords, or North Devons became a favourite pursuit of wealthy landlords. What the improvement was can be judged from these figures: in 1710 beeves averaged 370 lb. and sheep 28 lb.; in 1795 the former reached an average of 800 lb. and the latter 80 lb. Such beasts as these could not be raised on open fields.

Bakewell was a practical farmer and business man, who worked on theories of his own, which he tried to keep secret. But there were also many writers and theorists on the subject. The best known is Arthur Young (1741–1820), who, though he failed as a practical farmer, was widely influential with his pen. His tours in search of information as to the agricultural state of England, Ireland, and France, his agricultural monthly magazine, and finally his position as secretary to Pitt's new Board of Agriculture (1793), gave him enormous influence. He was a passionate upholder of enclosures, though not of the reckless way in which they were carried out. He made strenuous efforts after 1795 to secure some care for the cottager and some limit to the greed of the rich, but in vain.

The interest in agriculture was also evident from the number of cattle-shows, wool-fairs, &c., that were held all over the country. At the same time agricultural societies of all kinds were formed, both central and provincial.

Science, too, turned its attention to agriculture, and agricultural chemistry started with Humphry Davy's lectures in 1803.

It is obvious that the new farming required much capital, and the high prices due to the wars after 1795 made land an attractive investment. Typical of the new farmer-capitalist was Thomas William Coke (1752–1842). In 1778 he took in hand some land on his Norfolk estates, which produced a little rye and a few sheep and half-starved cows. Coke marled and clayed, bought manure, drilled his wheat and turnips, grew grasses, and trebled his live stock. The use of bones as manure, of oil-cake for feed, and of stall-feeding gave him still further production. He

improved his grass lands by sowing good seed, and worked early and late, helping also his tenants to improve their land. He spared no reasonable expense on farm buildings and cottages, and laid out altogether on this half a million of money. Long leases with agreements as to good farming made his tenants as anxious as himself to improve the land. His rents, which in 1776 were £2,200, rose to £20,000 by 1816. Of course, not all landlords were of this enlightened kind, nor were all farmers

> The challenge given by Mr. COKE of Norfolk, at the late ſheep-ſhearing at *Woburne*, to the Leiceſterſhire breeders, with a view to aſcertain the comparative excellence of the *new Leiceſterſhire*, and the *South-Down* breed of ſheep, was not, as has been falſely ſtated, in all the papers, refuſed by the latter. On the contrary, the Leiceſterſhire breeders told Mr. COKE, that if he would reduce his propoſition to writing, ſo that it might be clearly underſtood, and all poſſibility of evaſion avoided, they would willingly ſtake *five hundred guineas* on the ſuperiority of their own breed. This Mr. COKE declined, and in a manner that evidently ſhewed he was convinced that the ſuperior excellence of the *South-Down ſheep* was not to be ſupported.

RIVALRY IN BREEDING. A newspaper cutting of the nineties.

willing to follow a new lead. Coke estimated that his improvements travelled about one mile a year.

Wars and their effect. Enclosures undoubtedly increased prices, but it was war that ran them up to famine level. While wheat rose between 1765 and 1776 about 40 per cent., by 1812 Arthur Young estimated that the price of all provisions had risen 134¾ per cent., and now the labourer had to buy at full retail prices, since capitalist farmers produced for big markets and refused to sell bushels and quarters even to their own employees. War forced England to the effort to feed itself, and at the same time imposed heavy taxation. The average price of wheat between 1791 and 1801 was nearly 70s. a quarter, and famine

years brought it up to 128*s.* 6*d.* One writer has called Napoleon the ' patron saint not only of farmers but of landlords '.[1]

Peace produced a drop to 67*s.*, and later 60*s.*; the agriculturists were aghast, and a new corn law in 1804 raised the level at which corn might be imported to 63*s.* However, war again came to the help of the farmers, and the average price from 1805 to 1813 rose to 100*s.* 4*d.*, and profits and rents soared together.

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
1000 Bullocks, at 6*l.* a-piece	6000	00	00
6000 Sheep, at 12*s.* a-piece	3600	00	00
2000 Calves at 1*l.* 4*s.* a-piece	2400	00	00
3000 Lambs, at 8*s.* a-piece, for six months	1200	00	30
1500 Hogs in pork and bacon, at 20*s.* a-piece for six months	1500	00	00
2000 Pigs, at 2*s.* 6*d.* a-piece	250	00	00
1000 Turkies, at 3*s.* 6*d.* a-piece for six months	175	00	00
1000 Geese at 2*s.* 6*d.* a-piece for six months	125	00	00
2000 Capons, at 1*s.* 8*d.* a-piece	166	13	02
3000 Pullets, at 1*s.* 2*d.* a-piece	175	00	00
500 Dozen of chickens at 9*s.* per dozen	156	03	00
4300 Ducks at 9*d.* a-piece	161	05	00
1500 Do. of rabbits, at 7*s.* per doz. for 8 months	525	00	00
2000 Doz. of pigeons at 2*s.* per doz. for 8 months	200	00	00

LOW PRICES OF 1750. From *The London Magazine* Feb. 1750.

Peace in 1815 brought a drop, in spite of a new corn law excluding import till the price was 80*s.*

Some of these fluctuations were due to bad harvests, but war aggravated the evil, since import was almost impossible. The war-taxes were colossal. In 1815 a Herefordshire farmer showed that the taxes and rates on a 300-acre farm were over £380.

[1] Prothero, *English Farming*, p. 211.

TABLE of the Assize and Price of STANDARD WHEATEN BREAD,

In TWO PARTS.—According to an ACT paſſed in the 13th Year of GEORGE III.

N° I. Price of a Buſhel of Wheat, and Baking.

s.	d.
2	9
2	10
3	3
3	6
3	9
4	0
4	3
4	6
4	9
5	0
5	3
5	6
5	9
6	0
6	3
6	6
6	9
7	0
7	3
7	6
7	9
8	0
8	3
8	6
8	9
9	0
9	3
9	6
9	9
10	0
10	3
10	6
10	9

N° II.

The Aſſize Table.

SMALL BREAD.

Penny			Twopence		
l.	oz.	dr.	lb.	oz.	dr.
0	25	4	3	2	9
0	23	3	2	14	5
0	21	6	2	10	12
0	19	14	2	7	12
0	18	9	2	5	1
0	17	6	2	2	12
0	16	6	2	0	11
0	15	7	1	14	4
0	14	10	1	13	1
0	13	14	1	11	13
0	13	4	1	10	8
0	12	10	1	9	4
0	12	1	1	8	5
0	11	9	1	7	3
0	11	2	1	6	4
0	10		1	5	6
0	10	5	1	4	10
0	9	15	1	3	14
0	9	9	1	3	3
0	9	4	1	2	9
0	9	0	1	2	15
0	8	11	1	1	9
0	8	7	1	0	14
0	8	3	1	0	6
0	7	15	0	15	14
0	7	12	0	15	7
0	7	8	0	15	0
0	7	5	0	14	10
0	7	2	0	14	4
0	6	15	0	13	14
0	6	13	0	13	9
0	6	10	0	13	4
0	6	7	0	12	15

LARGE ASSIZED BREAD.

Sixpence			Twelve Pence			Eighteen Pence.		
lb.	oz.	dr.	lb.	oz.	dr.	lb.	oz.	dr.
6	7	11	13	15	5	20	7	0
6	4	13	13	8	11	20	0	14
6	1	15	13	2	3	19	10	5
5	15	2	12	12	4	19	3	13
5	12	11	12	6	6	18	13	2
5	10	4	12	0	7	18	6	11
5	7	13	11	14	15	18	0	4
5	5	7	11	9	0	17	13	13
5	3	1	11	3	2	17	7	3
5	0	11	10	13	13	17	0	13
4	15	7	10	8	1	16	14	2
4	13	4	10	2	9	16	7	14
4	11	13	9	12	11	16	1	7
4	9	9	9	7	11	15	15	5
4	7	6	9	2	1	15	9	1
4	5	4	8	12	3	15	2	12
4	3	2	8	7	5	14	12	7
4	1	1	8	2	8	14	6	13
3	15	0	7	13	0	14	1	2
3	13	0	7	8	3	13	11	5
3	11	0	7	3	6	13	5	8
3	9	0	6	14	9	13	0	11
3	7	1	6	10	0	12	11	2
3	5	2	6	5	3	12	6	5
3	3	3	6	0	6	12	1	8
3	1	5	5	11	9	11	12	14
2	15	7	5	7	0	11	8	0
2	13	9	5	2	3	11	3	3
2	12	0	4	13	6	11	0	9
2	10	2	4	8	9	10	13	13
2	8	4	4	4	0	10	9	0
2	6	6	4	0	3	10	4	5
2	4	8	3	15	6	10	0	0
2	3	0	3	11	0	9	15	10
2	1	2	3	6	6	9	11	7
1	15	4	3	2	9	9	7	4
1	13	6	2	14	5	9	3	1
1	11	8	2	10	12	8	14	13
1	10	0	2	7	12	8	11	2
1	8	2	2	5	1	8	7	14

N° I. Price of a Buſhel of Wheat, and Baking.

s.	d.
2	9
3	0
3	3
3	6
3	9
4	0
4	3
4	6
4	9
5	0
5	3
5	6
5	9
6	0
6	3
6	6
6	9
7	0
7	3
7	6
7	9
8	0
8	3
8	6
8	9
9	0
9	3
9	6
9	9
10	0
10	3
10	6
10	9

N° II.

The Price Table.

PRICED BREAD.

Quartern Loaf.		Half Pk. Loaf.		Peck Loaf.	
s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
0	2¼	0	5	0	11
0	3	0	6	1	0
0	3¼	0	6½	1	1
0	3½	0	7	1	2
0	3¾	0	7½	1	3
0	4	0	8	1	4
0	4¼	0	8½	1	5
0	4½	0	9	1	6
0	4¾	0	9½	1	7
0	5	0	10	1	8
0	5¼	0	10½	1	9
0	5½	0	11	1	10
0	5¾	0	11½	1	11
0	6	1	0	2	0
0	6¼	1	0½	2	1
0	6½	1	1	2	2
0	6¾	1	1½	2	3
0	7	1	2	2	4
0	7¼	1	2½	2	5
0	7½	1	3	2	6
0	7¾	1	3½	2	7
0	8	1	4	2	8
0	8¼	1	4½	2	9
0	8½	1	5	2	10
0	8¾	1	5½	2	11
0	9	1	6	3	0
0	9¼	1	6½	3	1
0	9½	1	7	3	2
0	9¾	1	7½	3	3
0	10	1	8	3	4
0	10¼	1	8½	3	5
0	10½	1	9	3	6
0	10¾	1	9½	3	7

An EXPLANATION of the preceding TABLE.

PART the FIRST, or the ASSIZE-TABLE, contains, in Column No I. the Price of the Buſhel of Wheat, *Winchester* Meaſure, from 2s. 9d. to 10s. 9d. the Buſhel, the Allowance of the Magiſtrates to the Baker for Baking included:—And in Column No. II. are the Weights of the ſeveral Loaves. So that at whatever Price of the Buſhel of Wheat with the Allowance, the Magiſtrates ſhall ſet the Aſſize, the ſame Price of Wheat is to be found in Column No. I. and even therewith in Column No. II. will be found the Weights of the ſeveral Loaves.

Note, That the ſame Weight of Standard Wheaten aſſized Bread as coſts Seven-pence, of Wheaten aſſized Bread will coſt Eight-pence, and of Houſhold aſſized Bread Six-pence: Or, Seven Standard aſſized Loaves will weigh Eight Wheaten aſſized Loaves, or Six Houſhold aſſized Loaves of the ſame Price, as near as may be.

PART the SECOND, or the PRICE TABLE, contains, in Column No. I. the Price of the Buſhel of Wheat, *Winchester* Meaſure, from 2s. 9d. to 10s. 9d. the Buſhel, the Allowance of the Magiſtrates to the Baker for Baking included: And in Column No. II. are the Prices of the Peck, Half-Peck, and Quartern Loaves.

Note, That the Standard Wheaten Peck-Loaf is always to weigh 17 lb. 6 oz. Averdupois, and the Half-Peck and Quartern Loaves in proportion; and when the ſaid Peck-Loaf is ſold for Fourteen-pence, the Wheaten Peck-Loaf is to be ſold for Sixteen-pence, and the Houſhold Peck-Loaf is to be ſold for Twelve-pence, and always as near as may be in the ſame proportion. No Half-Quartern Loaves are to be made.

Note, *That this Table is framed for Bread to be made of the whole Produce of the Wheat, except the Bran or Hull thereof only; the ſaid Produce to weigh three-fourths of the Wheat whereof it is made.*

This Table ſhould be preſerved in every Family, as it at once points out the Weight and Price of Bread in proportion to the Price of Wheat.

RISING PRICES. The Act of 1773 gave a ſcale for the price of bread

and in 1833 it was estimated that a labourer earning £22 10*s.* a year paid £11 7*s.* 7*d.* in indirect taxes. And war not only brings taxes, it often upsets the currency. Even before the Napoleonic war the issue of paper money was largely increased, not only by the Bank of England, but by private banks. Money being plentiful, prices rose accordingly.[1] There had been a crash in 1793, and 350 banks stopped payment, and in 1797 another crisis was only partially avoided. In the same year the Bank of England suspended gold payment, and by 1814 240 banks stopped payment and much of the paper currency became

Enormous Poor's-Rate — A correspondent states, that the poor's rate in Hinckley, in Leicestershire, amounts to 52 shillings in the pound. Nearly two thirds of the town are in a state of pauperism. During the last week, several persons of respectable appearance in Walsall, have been distrained upon for their rates, when it appeared that they were totally without bedding, and other ordinary comforts, which had been previously sacrificed to exactions of the tax-gatherer.

From *The Liverpool Mercury*, Nov. 22, 1816.

worthless. It has been estimated that one-fifth of the high prices of agricultural produce in 1812 was due to the chaotic state of the currency. Peace brought a drop in prices, but not a release from taxation, and the weight of this fell on those least able to bear it.

Changes in the Poor Law. Meanwhile the increasing poverty of the worker was becoming evident in the rise of the poor-rates. About 1750 the poor rate for the country amounted to £700,000, by 1776 it had risen to £1,500,000, by 1786 to £2,000,000. Part of the rise was no doubt due to the increase of population, which between 1750 and 1800 rose from 5½ to 9 millions. Wages were entirely below subsistence level at current prices at any time after 1765. Hasbach reckons that the average in the south before the rise of prices was 1*s.* a day, and between 1775 and 1790 only 2*d.* higher ;[2] by 1803 they had risen about 40 per cent.,[3]

[1] See p. 183.
[2] Hasbach, *History of the English Agricultural Labourer*, p. 118.
[3] Ibid., p. 121.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES!

Two parishes in Shropshire are taxed for the poor at the rate of 16s. 8d. in the pound, and all the lands in the parish are taxed as high as 30s. per acre! It appears that the poor of the whole county of Cardigan, as well as a great part of the adjacent county, have been without fuel during the whole winter, in consequence of the inclement weather of the last autumn having destroyed their provision of turf!

Nothing can be more decisive of the state of the country, than the diminished consumption of the leading articles subject to the duties of excise. The falling off has been progressive during the present quarter. It is stated to be upwards of £600,000.

A parliamentary document, lately laid before the House of Commons, shows the produce of the assessed taxes for the year ending the 5th of January last, to be less than that of the preceding year by four hundred and thirty-one thousand six hundred and sixty-seven pounds. Under every one of the heads of charge, from which the total is made up, there is a deficiency. The total of these charges for the year ending January 5, 1815, was £6,414,641; —more by six hundred and twenty-eight thousand three hundred and eighteen pounds than that of the year now concluded.

Tea.—By a statement in the *Times* newspaper, we learn, that in the two last years there had been a falling off in the consumption of tea, in Great Britain, of above four millions of pounds, and consequently in the *ad valorem* duties of about one million one hundred thousand pounds.

On Wednesday se'ennight, an inquest was held at the Mitre, Broadwall, on the body of C. Fowler, a tailor, but who had been out of work most part of the winter; and since last Christmas his parish allowed him 3s. per week, which was the sole support of his wife and two children. The week preceding his death, his wife was brought to bed, and the parish increased his pension on that account to 7s. which he went to receive on Monday se'ennight; but was so weak, that a woman who attended his wife in her lying-in, went out of humanity with him to the workhouse, and having received the money, they were returning home, when he dropped down in Gravel-lane, and expired on the spot. He had a sixpence in his pocket besides what he received as above; and it is remarkable that a difference of opinion existed among the jury, some being for a verdict of—"Starved to death." It was, however, at length decided, in consequence of his having money in his pocket, that he died a natural death! A verdict was accordingly returned—"Died by the visitation of God."

From *The Liverpool Mercury*, April 4, 1817

but prices were up anything from 50 per cent. to 400 per cent. Obviously, if wages could not rise the poor-rate must. The real remedy was, of course, a statutory minimum wage, compelling farmers to pay a living wage, but the Government would have none of it, and finding in 1812 that the old laws empowering the justices to fix wages were still in existence, they promptly repealed them. Whitbread made two great efforts in 1796 and 1800 to establish the power to enact minimum wages, but was foiled by the opposition of Pitt and the great landlords. The only other suggestion of a remedy for low wages was a change of diet on the part of the labourers! Such being the situation, the labourers fell back on the Poor Law. There were in practice three main methods of relief for the able-bodied.

(*a*) The ROUNDSMAN SYSTEM. (α) A labourer out of work might be leased to the farmer by the overseers at a certain price and the poor-rate added the sum necessary to raise this to a living wage, extra allowances being made for each child; (β) the farmer paid the parish for the man's work and the parish paid the man; (γ) the labourer might be sold by auction weekly or monthly, the farmer whose offer left the least sum over to be found by the rates securing his services.

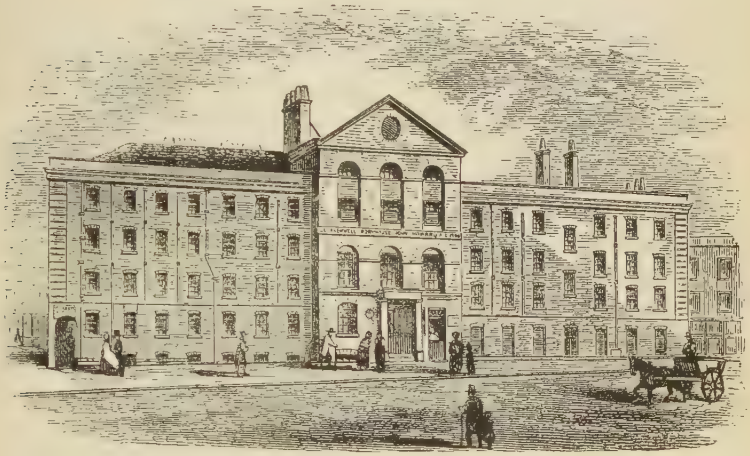
(*b*) The LABOUR-RATE SYSTEM. Ratepayers undertook to employ a certain number of paupers in lieu of paying their rates.

(*c*) Paupers worked in GANGS under foremen, the farmer paying the overseers for the gang.

The workhouses, which had been increased in number in 1722, were filled with the sick, the old, and the children in a chaotic herd, amid surroundings of unspeakable misery and degradation.

But the principle of subsidized labour reached its climax in what became known as the SPEENHAMLAND SYSTEM. Its origin is a strange instance of the part chance plays in English affairs. Some Berkshire justices, appalled at the misery around them, met in 1795 in the Pelican Inn at Speenhamland (now a part of Newbury) to decide on a scale of minimum wages. A party

of eighteen, of whom seven were clergy, met with this object ; what happened at the discussion is not known, but the decision was, not to fix wages, but to supplement them by poor-relief. A scale was drawn up allowing a fixed sum for each member of the family, and if the man's earnings did not come to so much the overseers were to make it up. The fixed sum varied with the price of corn, and was based on an allowance of 26 lb. of



CLERKENWELL WORKHOUSE as enlarged in 1790.

bread a week for the man and at half that rate for his wife and each child. This scheme was not the invention of this meeting, but they standardized the scale, and it spread rapidly through the country. The stupidity of one generation often seems incredible to its descendants, and it is difficult for us to understand how the men of 1795 could be so blind to the effect of their deeds. Such a system was bound to turn the rural population into a mass of state-fed paupers, and the injustice of throwing the cost of farm labour on the whole of the ratepayers would seem obvious. Certainly it hastened the end of the small farmer, for while he employed little or no labour himself, he was thus

compelled to pay part of the cost of that of the big farms. These two results they might at least have foreseen, but the moral degradation of the rural areas was an even greater disaster. In the first place good and bad work alike secured a mere subsistence; in the next, farmers preferred pauper labour as cheaper, and a man often had to make himself a pauper before he could obtain work; if he had saved a few possessions he must get rid of them before he was able to earn anything.

Lastly, children became a paying concern, for each new birth added another 1*s.* 6*d.* to the weekly allowance, and the illegitimate birth-rate rose rapidly. In thirty years the rural population changed from a sturdy race of hard-working independent peasant farmers to two sharply opposed classes of very well-to-do farmers employing considerable capital on large farms and a landless proletariate living partly on doles, from whom had been taken every incentive to good work, thrift, or temperate living.

The pressure of a pauperized class of labourers became so great that attempts were made to lessen the strain; parish authorities kept a stricter watch on immigrants and lawsuits between parishes were incessant, so that in 1815 the money spent on litigation and removal of paupers amounted to £287,000. In 1819 the appointment of salaried overseers was allowed, with the result that the administration of the Poor Law was made much harsher. The salaried overseers were universally hated, though the ratepayer was a little relieved. After the fall in prices the rates of allowance were steadily decreased. In Northamptonshire by 1816 they had fallen so low that a man and wife were allowed, as estimated in pounds of bread, little more than the man alone in 1795; and in Wiltshire, in 1817, it was still lower. The allowance in 1831 for a family of four was two-thirds of that in 1795.

Rural England in 1833. How then did the labourer live, since even rate-subsidized wages were reduced below subsistence limit? He lived chiefly by reducing his standard below the level at which full strength and energy can be maintained. Meat, butter, and even cheese disappeared almost entirely from

his diet, milk left the poor man's dwelling along with his cow, and tea took the place of both milk and beer; even for children tea was often the only drink. His cottage was a mere hovel, often dumped by the side of the road, his children ran in rags. There were, however, two resources by which he might stave off actual starvation: the charity of the rich or the appropriation of their game. Of the former there was a considerable amount; it was still regarded as a Christian virtue, and practised by many of the large proprietors and their wives and daughters. The spirit in which such help was given was too often such as to encourage mean-spirited sponging and to penalize any exhibition of independence and self-respect. As to poaching, it became almost universal, and was regarded by the villager as a legitimate act. Certainly, without it, many families would have starved.

The change in seventy years has been forcibly summarized thus: 'The peasant with rights and a status, with a share in the fortunes and government of his village, standing in rags but standing on his feet, makes way for the labourer with no corporate rights to defend, no corporate power to invoke, no property to cherish, no ambition to pursue, bent beneath the fear of his masters, and the weight of a future without hope.' [1]

What of the yeomanry, of whom Geoffrey King had estimated there were in England 160,000 in 1688? They had largely disappeared. A few had become rich and passed into the ranks of the gentry, most had sold their holdings and either used the money to rent and stock larger ones, or had drifted into the towns. In the bad fall of prices after 1813 many went bankrupt, having speculated in land no longer profitable; others went under from the weight of excessive taxation. As the number of small farms decreased, their price rose and made the existence of small-farming still more difficult. Hasbach is of opinion that the smaller yeomen and copyholders suffered almost as much by enclosures as the landless cottagers.

The smaller gentry, too, were ruined, and their sons either rented large farms or left the land altogether for the professions

[1] Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, p. 105.

or commerce. The East Indies received many. Small-farming did survive in some counties, e. g. Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Yorkshire, and Durham.

Thus the intermediate ranks of the rural population dropped out, and capitalist employers and proletarian labourers stood face to face with an unbridgeable gulf between.

Yet the story of these years had not been entirely one of prosperity to the capitalist. From 1814 to 1830 had been a terrible time of depression, and tenant farmers had failed by thousands. The chief cause was the crushing burden of taxes and rates. The war had doubled the price of wheat, but it had multiplied the national expenditure by five, and enclosures and Speenhamland had quadrupled the poor-rate. The apparent profits of the war period had caused land to reach fancy prices, and the standard of living of both landowner and tenant had risen considerably. At the fall of prices came panic and failure. Land went out of cultivation, work was scarce, and the labourer was eventually driven to revolt.

By 1833 things were being adjusted, but it was the landowner who found the capital this time, not the tenant farmer.

Summary. There are seven factors tending to the break up of the old English village :

1. Enclosures, and the selfish and reckless way in which they were carried out.
2. Rise of the price of provisions, partly caused by enclosures.
3. New methods of cultivation which demanded a different class of men and larger capital.
4. The system of larger farms, which were economically more productive.
5. The more luxurious standard of living that was adopted by the landlord class.
6. The increased taxation due to the war, which raised the cost of living.
7. The attraction of the growing industries of the towns.

Though many remedies for the misery of the rural population were suggested, the only one adopted was an extension of poor

relief, which resulted in the degradation and pauperization of the workers.

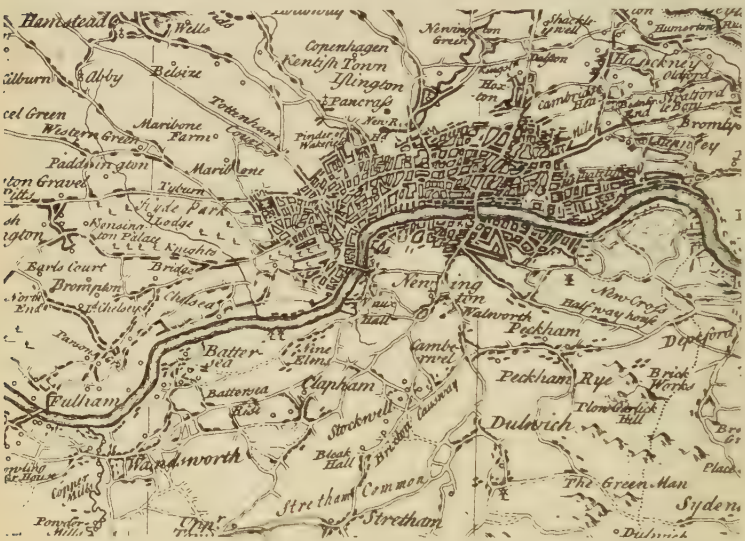
'Summing up therefore the economic results of the whole mass of little village revolutions under examination we find increased production of all sorts of commodities, increased national resources for purposes of taxation and foreign war. The moral effects we find to have been increased misery and recklessness, showing itself in increased pauperism and drunkenness. An increase in the quantity of human life is attained at the expense of a degradation in its quality.' [1]

2. The Industrial Revolution

We have seen that during the eighty-three years of the period we are now considering both the outward face and the economic structure of rural England were changed out of all knowledge, what then of the towns? In 1750 most of the towns of England were still the small market towns of the Middle Ages, a little larger, somewhat better built—much was stone that had been wood—but still in rural surroundings, fed by the adjacent districts, and, in civic life, sleepier than they had been four hundred years before. Even London, though it had grown enormously, still had its rural areas of Kensington, Fulham, and Hammersmith, and 'people of rank to correct their tone went out of town to Marybone'. Manchester was not even a borough, and was governed by a Constable responsible to the lord of the manor, who lived in Derbyshire. Even busy centres of industry like Norwich, Bradford (in Wiltshire), Sheffield, or Birmingham lacked all the features that we now associate with an industrial area. Instead of towering blocks of factories, 100-ft. chimneys belching black smoke, rows and rows of mean, ugly houses, clanging trams, granite setts from which the riot of wheels re-echoes to blocks of offices and warehouses, we should have found irregularly built groups of often rather tumble-down cottages straggling out into the countryside, each with its bit of land growing larger as we left the centre of the town. In

[1] Slater, *The English Peasantry and Enclosure of Common Fields*, 1907, p. 266.

that centre would be a town hall, a produce market, a wool or cloth hall, or some place for selling the results of the local industry, where, with much noise and leisurely bargaining, the goods made on cottage looms, in sheds, and outbuildings, were sold by the men who had made them. Just as in the villages of the time, so there were in the towns many grades of men,



EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LONDON

a ladder of improving status from the wage-earning journeyman, unskilled or skilled, through craftsmen such as blacksmith, cooper, and publican, small master, larger master, to well-to-do merchant, banker, lawyer, doctor, and civic dignitaries. Meadows and open fields mixed with the outlying houses—the town was only an overgrown village. By 1834 the fields and commons had largely disappeared, the centre of the town was no longer a market to which each seller brought the work of his hands; the small man, half manufacturer, half farmer, had gone from the outskirts. Already in dozens of towns the now familiar

The South-East Prospect of the CITY of NORWICH.

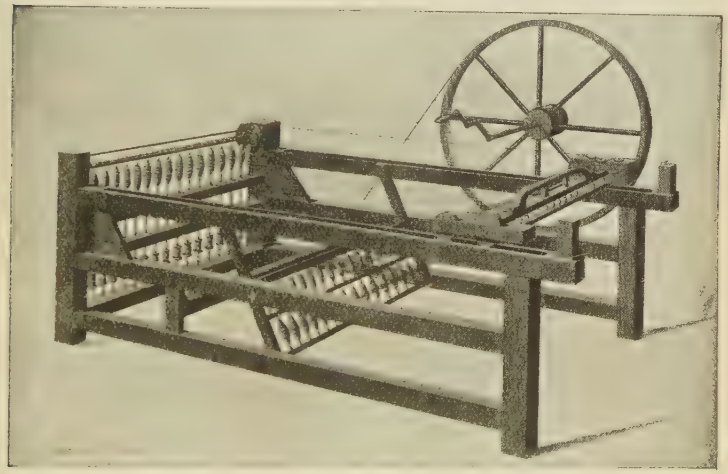
From *The Universal Magazine*, 1753

factory blocks were appearing, over the green fields were spreading, like an evil fungus, thousands of hovels built, not for homes, but as mere shelters for the swarms of 'hands' demanded by the new system; the small master was nearly gone, leaving face to face the well-to-do employer and a landless wage-earning proletariate sunk to a standard of life lower, relatively to that of the better-off classes, than the western world had known for fourteen centuries. Even worse, if possible, than the old towns swamped by the tide of incoming capitalism were the mushroom growths of mere villages, without any civic tradition of organization, that arose round the mills dumped by the new enterprise on any convenient spot, towns which were no towns, merely groups of wretched hutments in which slept the slaves of the new order, dependent on their masters' shops for food and drink and clothing, possessed of one liberty only, the liberty to starve. 'They were not the refuge of a civilisation but the barracks of an industry.'

The story we have now to tell is the story of this change.

Capitalist Tendencies before the Advent of Machinery. It would be a mistake to assert that this change sprang suddenly on English life because certain men, with no determining cause, started inventing machinery. Machinery gave to a current already obvious in the stream of our social life the force of a cataract, by which it bore away most of the ancient landmarks, but the current had already started before Hargreaves and Arkwright and the rest had even dreamed a dream. Capitalistic industry, we have seen, was at least as old as the fifteenth century, and Adam Smith said in 1776 that in every part of Europe twenty workmen served under a master for one that was independent. Before any machinery had appeared many spinners in the textile trades had given up buying their own wool and cotton, and merely received it from travelling merchants and were paid for their work on it only. This was a first step away from the state of buying your own raw material, working on it, and then re-selling the worked article. It was substituting piecework wages for the craftsman's profits. Already

in the very early eighteenth century the journeyman tailor, destined to be a life-long wage-earner, was common; the capitalist had appeared as the owner of the fashionable tailor's shop in place of the working craftsman who made up 'customer's own materials'. In the West of England woollen industry capitalist control was already dominant, though the organization was still domestic. The framework knitters of Nottingham and



HARGREAVES' SPINNING-JENNY, patented in 1764.

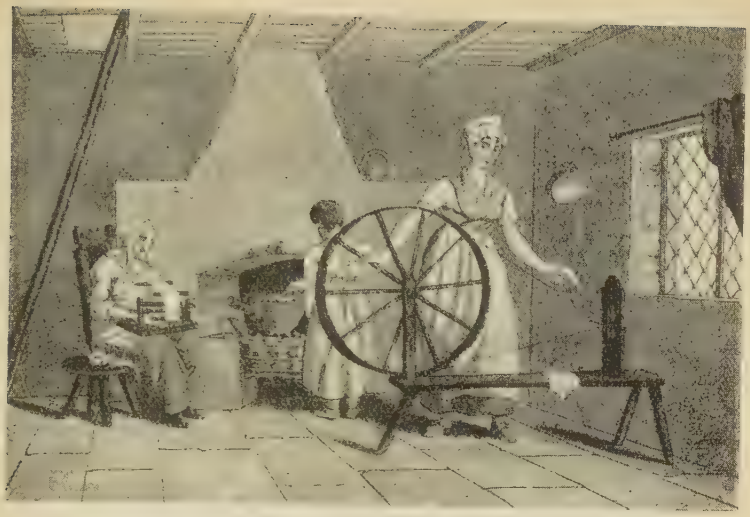
Leicester worked on frames hired from, and on yarn supplied by, their masters, men with capital who merely organized the trade.

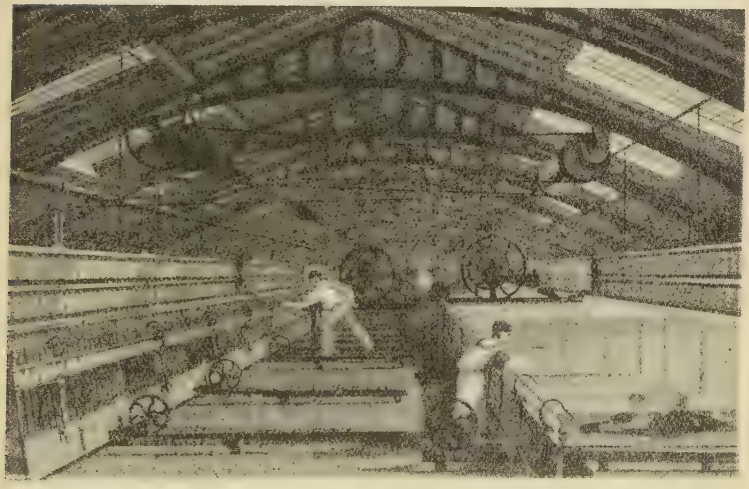
Mechanical Inventions. Society was thus ripe for the adoption of any new methods that involved capital outlay and energetic organization. The invention of the flying shuttle [1] had made still greater the difficulty, already considerable, of securing enough yarn to keep pace with the weaver. Weavers wasted much time going round the country collecting yarn from outlying houses and cottages, often bribing the women by the

[1] See p. 280.

present of a ribbon or a new cap to spin faster. To meet the need, HARGREAVES, in 1765, invented the spinning-jenny, by which at first eight and later one hundred spindles could be worked by one wheel. The output of yarn was largely increased, but spinning-jennies could be worked in the cottages, as before the single wheel had been. The next invention foreshadowed the great change. In 1769 ARKWRIGHT patented a machine for spinning by rollers worked by water-power. Roller spinning had been invented thirty years before, but came to nothing. In this method the wool or flax was spun by being drawn between pairs of rollers, the second pair moving faster than the first—so giving the pulling effect of the arm movement in hand spinning. Arkwright's water-frames were the true pioneers of the new industry, since they had to be worked together in factories placed where water-power was obtainable. This method produced a stronger thread than had hitherto been possible for cotton, and henceforth pure cotton goods could be made with warp-thread spun in Arkwright's mills. Hitherto cotton goods had had linen or woollen warp. These frames had the added advantage from the manufacturer's standpoint that children could work them, while the large jennies required much skill and strength. Arkwright followed up this invention by machines for carding, drawing, and roving, about 1775.

In 1779 came CROMPTON'S mule, so called because it borrowed features from the jenny and the water-frame. It had both rollers and spindles, and produced a very strong, fine thread, which made it possible to make fine muslin in England. Before this only the supple fingers of Indian hand spinners could make fine enough thread. Yet for a long time spinning remained almost a domestic industry, and such factories as there were were small. A man could start in a shed with one mule and increase his plant gradually. Even in the cotton industry it took over twenty years to transfer the spinner to the factory. There was, however, a change; the spinster became a spinner, for the mules required the strength of men. About 1782 WATT invented his steam-engine, and it was first used for spinning at





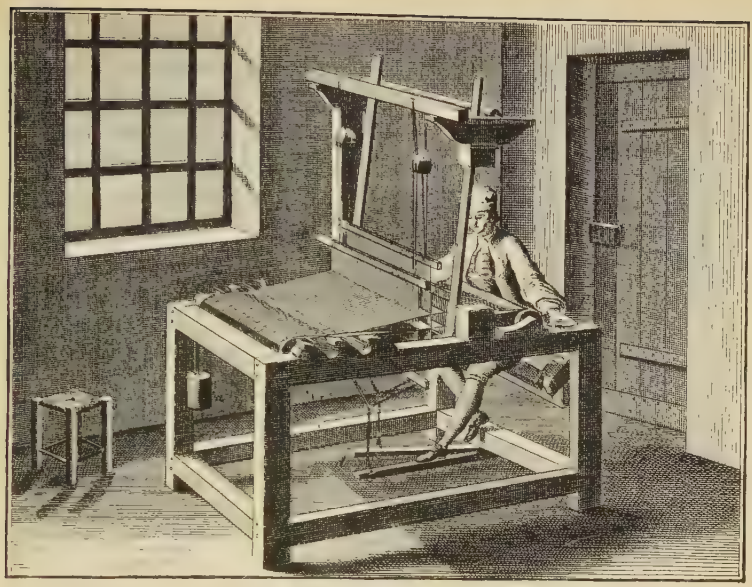
THE REVOLUTION IN SPINNING

Papplewick in 1785; by the end of the century water-mills ceased to be built, and steam factories were common. Lastly, by 1825, a satisfactory self-acting mule was achieved, and the work of a spinner became that of a supervisor of several machines.

CRANK MILL, Morley, Yorkshire. Built in 1790, this mill was driven by steam and was the first to be erected in the neighbourhood.

Long before this, however, the quantity of yarn spun had overtaken the capacity of the weaver to absorb it, and the next move forward was in the loom. In 1785 CARTWRIGHT invented a power-loom, a clumsy instrument at first, which was gradually improved. It was not, however, in general use for cotton weaving till after 1834,[1] though common after 1810, and it was still later in the woollen industry. In 1790–2 he devised the first wool-

[1] In 1829-31 there were 225,000 hand-looms and 80,000 power-looms in the cotton industry in Great Britain.



THE REVOLUTION IN WEAVING

combing machine, which eventually revolutionized the worsted industry. The story of these inventors is interesting as illustrating two points: first, that the need produced the device; secondly, that the financial advantages of the invention rarely went to its originator. James Hargreaves was a working weaver near Blackburn, illiterate and possessed of no capital. He tried at first to keep his invention secret, using it only himself. It was discovered, however, and broken up by a mob. Hargreaves then left his native place for Nottingham, and with a partner erected a small mill and patented his jenny. His patent was grossly infringed, and Hargreaves died in 1778, not in poverty, but only possessed of a few hundred pounds. The history of Sir Richard Arkwright, sometime travelling barber and eventually knight and high sheriff of his county, was somewhat different. How far he was actually the inventor of the machines that bore his name can hardly now be settled; possibly, like Kipling's Sir Anthony Gloster, he was ' no fool to finish if a man'll give me a hint '. There is no doubt, however, that he was past-master in the arts of push and organization, and possessed of a perseverance and resourcefulness that never failed. He was able to convince men with money of the great promise of his machines, and he never ceased improving them year after year. In spite of the success of the challengers of his patents in getting them set aside, he succeeded in making a large fortune, and died in 1792, having ' made himself and a million ' by working sixteen hours a day and seeing to it that ' whoever lost, he was a gainer '. He was the first, but not the last of the men whom the new system enabled to rise from the lowest rank to place and power.

Samuel Crompton, like Hargreaves, was a working weaver, and like him, too, he aimed merely at improving his own output. The excellence and fineness of his yarn aroused curiosity, and as he took out no patent, others used and improved his work with no benefit to him. In 1812 Parliament granted him £5,000 in recognition of the benefit to industry of his machine. This he invested in a bleaching business for his sons, who quickly

lost it, and Crompton and his daughter were reduced to poverty. A small annuity of £63 was bought for him by his friends, which he enjoyed for two years, dying in 1827, leaving his daughter unprovided for.

James Watt, who began life as a scientific instrument maker, was more fortunate. Thanks to the extraordinary patent privileges bestowed on him by Parliament in 1769 and 1775, which secured his invention to him for twenty-five years, he was able to prevent any one else making steam-engines, while he perfected his own and incidentally made a large fortune.

The fate of Edmund Cartwright was more usual, but his story is much more extraordinary. All the others were men who by their past experience had at least some acquaintance with simple mechanism. Cartwright was a clergyman and a scholar, living the life of leisurely ease of an eighteenth-century parson, when one summer day in 1784 he met at Matlock some Manchester men talking about spinning machinery and the problem of the probable production of more yarn than could be woven. Laughed at when he suggested the possibility of weaving by machinery, he took up the challenge, went home, and without even troubling to see a loom, devised a mechanical one of which he was very proud, and which he patented. As it took two strong men to work it slowly, its utility was nil, and at this point he decided to see an ordinary loom at work. By 1787 he had devised and patented a practical machine. But it was still very imperfect, and Cartwright, who gave up his profession and invested his private means in the new industry, got his affairs utterly tangled, and even a grant of £10,000 from Parliament in 1809 failed to set him right.

In 1801 Joseph Marie Jacquard of Lyons invented the Jacquard loom to enable elaborate patterns to be woven. It can be used for all kinds of weaving, but is specially advantageous for silk.

Such sudden changes in the space of some fifty years coming at a time when the last traces of mediaeval organization were being swept away, were almost bound to produce chaos. The

men of the time seemed to grow drunk with the limitless vistas of gain that were opening before them. Any one who could get together or borrow a little capital could start with a mule or two and a few children to work them, and with industry and luck be a wealthy mill-owner in a few years. Robert Owen started in one room with three men working hand-mules. The wildest speculation in overseas markets took place with occasional crashes, such as that of 1809 when the export of cotton goods nearly doubled in a year and the newly opened markets of South America were swamped with every kind of English goods, for which there were not even warehouses. The lack of intelligent organization is shown by the crates of cut-glass and elegant china sent to wild prairie lands and even of skates to the tropics. It is also obvious that the use of machinery greatly increased the interdependence of industries. The demand for iron and steel increased at the moment when the English industry was almost exhausted. Iron required coal as did the new steam factories, and at least three great industries became mutually indispensable. Again, the new industries were more and more specialized, and each individual became less and less self-sufficing. A break-down in one branch destroyed the market of another, the closing of a cotton factory cut off some of the market of the iron-worker and the miner and lessened their earnings, and all three would in time react on that of the farmer. It was a new complexity in human life and men had no plans as yet to meet it.

Special Industries. It will be well perhaps to look a little more closely at some typical special industries.

1. The COTTON industry stands out not only as being practically new, but as being the present type of the new system. It was not absolutely new, but before 1760 it was small and dependent on wool and linen yarn for its warp. Pure cottons could not be made in England. It may have been chance that started the early cotton-workers in Lancashire, it was not chance that kept the industry there. Arkwright's spinning machine needed water-power, and eastern Lancashire is full of little mountain streams. When steam took the place of water, Lanca-

shire had coal ready to hand. Even more important, as it turned out, Lancashire had a climate. Cotton yarn requires warmth and moisture if it is to be spun fine, and Lancashire lacks nothing of the latter. Western winds, blowing off the ocean, strike the cold mountain barriers of the Pennines and descend in rain; the rains and mists that blot out the sun have given to Lancashire an advantage that so far no other country has succeeded in overtaking.

The freedom of the new industry from custom and tradition enabled it to adopt the new processes more quickly than others, often to the detriment of the workers, but to the great increase of total wealth. The import of raw cotton rose in the seventy years before 1833 from 3 million to 300 million lb. What is raw cotton? It is the product of a plant that grows in warm climates, whose pods when ripe burst open and disclose seeds embedded in a white or creamy mass of fibres, not quite straight like flax, nor quite curly like wool. A field of cotton when ripe is very beautiful, the globes of white wool shining out from a background of dark green leaves. Sometimes yellow flowers and ripe pods appear at the same time and add to the beauty. In some countries the cotton plant is a shrub or tree. The best quality comes from America, and is known as Sea Island cotton. Most of the cotton used in Lancashire comes from the United States or Egypt. The seeds are removed from the cotton by ginning before it is packed. The processes of the manufacture up to 1834 have all been mentioned already. The cotton wool was first cleaned and carded; from the carding machine it came in a loose twist about half an inch thick, called a sliver; this sliver was drawn out and given a slight twist by a process called roving, and then spun. The weaving followed and later bleaching and dyeing. The warps were sized before being put on the loom. All the new inventions were used first in cotton manufacture. Water-power was never used for weaving, for by the time the power-loom was established, steam-power was general. The effect of the early spinning machines was to bring great prosperity to the hand-

weavers, but from 1800 to 1830 their condition steadily declined, and by 1835 the power-loom had practically superseded them.

The subsidiary processes of bleaching and dyeing had kept pace in development with the rest. The old hand-process of bleaching had taken six to eight months to complete. In 1774 SCHEELE discovered chlorine, and in 1785 BERTHOLLET in France applied it to bleaching, and the eight months became two days. The 'grey cloth' was washed, boiled with lime, bleached by steeping in chloride of lime, steeped in weak acid, washed in an alkali, bleached again, and again steeped in acid. Cotton printing had been a very small industry before 1750. It had been done by means of hand-blocks of wood, and 28 yds. of cotton cloth required 448 applications of the block. In 1785 cylinder printing was first used, and was rapidly improved and cheapened. New methods of dyeing were also discovered.

By 1835 cotton was predominately a machine industry. The rate at which it developed produced a cut-throat competition among the masters, and it was the cotton trade for the most part that absorbed the influx of the workers from the rural areas and from Ireland.

2. Let us look at two industries that from being of secondary importance now rose to the first rank.

Although COAL was by the beginning of the eighteenth century in very general use for domestic purposes, the seams worked were all on or near the surface. These were comparatively safe and easy to work; water was the chief trouble, and this was overcome by opening long passages that drained it out to lower levels in the open, on what was known as the pit and adit system. The pits were not deep and the workings were made over a small radius from the bottom of the shaft. More than half the coal was left behind, as huge 'pillars' of coal larger than the worked-out passages had to be left to support the rocks above. Sometimes 'walls of coal' were left instead of pillars, sometimes the coal was worked out in a kind of pocket. Only natural ventilation was used—a down-draught of air in one shaft and an up-draught in the other caused by difference of levels; the speed

THE COAL INDUSTRY. A view of the mouth of a Coal-Pit near Broseley in Shropshire, 1788

and quantity of the air currents varied with the season. By 1775 the lower strata were being attacked, and this proved to be very dangerous. The coal, especially in the Northumberland and Durham fields, was very fiery, and the ventilation of pits over 600 ft. deep became a serious problem. There was no known protection against the explosive fire-damp (carburetted hydrogen) except by diluting it by ventilation, and in deep pits this was often inadequate. It was improved by having a furnace to warm the air in the up-cast shaft, but since the air passing out was laden with fire-damp it often exploded as it passed the fire. The system, too, needed an elaborate management of doors and traps to prevent the air taking short cuts and leaving pockets of foul air, and the working of these doors was left in the hands of children. The presence of explosive gas made the lighting question difficult: one naked candle in contact with a pocket of gas might and did blow to nothingness the works of a large mine and all the workers in it. An invention called a steel mill was much used, by which the miner worked by the dim light of a rapid succession of sparks struck from a steel wheel, which was slightly, but only slightly, less dangerous than the candle, and as light, much less effective. Not till 1815, when Sir Humphry Davy invented the Safety Lamp, was any real protection available. Even then its introduction was slow, and a false sense of security often led to its use in places where, without other special precautions, it was of no avail; deeper and more fiery seams were opened up, often with fatal results.

The inadequacy for deeper mines of the pumping apparatus in use brought about the invention of the steam-engine for pumping, and this in turn made lower seams available. The first practical engine in which steam was used to create a vacuum had been invented by Newcomen in 1712, and was used to work the pumps which were necessary to rid the lower seams of water, since they could not be drained to lower levels. In 1769 Watt patented a great improvement on Newcomen's engine by cooling the steam in a vessel separated from the cylinder and surrounding the cylinder itself with a steam jacket.

But as yet the machine could only work one way—it could push but not pull. In 1782 Watt arranged a mechanism by which the action was continuous, and so could be converted into rotary motion at will—the steam-engine as we know it was born.

Such being the condition of the mechanical processes of coal mining, it is not surprising to find that the early years of the nineteenth century were the most dangerous in mining history. Inquests were not usually held on mining accidents till after 1813. Between 1801–15, 415 lives are recorded to have been lost by explosion in the Tyne coal-fields alone. But it was not only in the risks of the work that the conditions of mining were bad. The owners of the collieries were chiefly aristocrats and large landowners, like Lord Londonderry, Lord Durham, and the Duke of Portland, and feudal conditions survived to a late date.

The miners of Scotland were, till 1799, still serfs bound to the soil, and though the English miners were nominally free they were far from being so in reality. We shall deal later with the conditions of children in the mines ;[1] women worked in many, and in view of the hours could only have attended to their homes by additional night work. Wages were low, about 15*s.* a week, and in the lead mines 7*s.* to 8*s.* In Northumberland it was customary to engage miners by the year, and when the supply of labour became scarce owing to the growing demand for coal the owners in 1765 tried to bind the colliers to them by agreeing not to engage men unless they had a leaving certificate from their last master. This was practical slavery. The men also lived in ' tied cottages ', i. e. owned by the mine-owners, and the usual answer to a strike was to turn the men out of their homes. One clerical owner did it when cholera was raging. There were other grievances, such as shops kept by the owners, at which the men ran bills and paid exorbitant prices, and on pay-day received only the balance of the money after their bills were paid. The owners, too, were not above

[1] See p. 366.

Fig. 1.
Fig. 2.
Fig. 3.
Fig. 4.
Fig. 5.
Fig. 6.
Fig. 7.
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THE REVOLUTION IN IRON. 'An Iron Work, for casting of Cannon; and a Boring Mill. Taken from the Madeley side of the River Severn, Shropshire,' 1788

swindling the men, for one of the most hotly resisted of the reforms asked for was that one of themselves should check the weights of the corves of coal on which their wages were reckoned. They still suffered from all these grievances at the end of our period, in spite of the gallantly fought strike of 1831. In Staffordshire and Derbyshire the masters were not rich landowners, but working men called 'butties', to whom the pits were leased. The conditions here had all the evils and none of the mitigations of the feudal relationship. The small capitalist here, as in the cotton industry, was worse than the big one.

Iron. Towards the end of our last period the iron industry of England had sunk to a low level, and the production of crude pig iron had decreased to 17,350 tons annually. The Darbys' invention for using coke,[1] and about the same time that of Huntsman for making more homogeneous steel by remelting it in clay crucibles, gave a great impetus to production. It may be well to explain that there are three classes of manufactured iron, viz. cast iron, which contains more than 1·5 per cent. of carbon; steel, which has quantities varying between 0·5 and 1·5 per cent. of carbon; and malleable or wrought iron, containing less than 0·5 per cent. of carbon. Cast iron is brittle when cold, and cannot be hardened and tempered like steel. Wrought iron is nearly pure iron, and when hot assumes a pasty condition, in which it is easily welded; when cold it is ductile, but it also cannot be hardened and tempered. Steel is hard, and can be made harder by heating and cooling rapidly. It is also much stronger than either cast or wrought iron. At the beginning of this period cast iron was made by direct smelting of the ores and then remelting and pouring into moulds; wrought iron was cast iron decarburized in a 'finery'. Steel was made from pure wrought iron by heating it with charcoal and so introducing a limited amount of carbon. This process is called cementation.

In 1760 cylinders with close-fitting pistons were used instead of leather bellows to make the blast, and after 1783 the steam-

[1] See p. 280.

A 1788 engraving of the Iron Bridge over the Severn

engine came into rapid use to work the blast, to drive the forge-hammer, and to roll sheet into bar iron. In 1784 came the first great advance, CORT'S method of making wrought iron from cast iron, called PUDDLING. The old method of decarburizing iron by working in small hearths with charcoal was wasteful of labour and fuel. Cort arranged a reverberatory furnace, i.e. one in which the metal is not in contact with the fuel but heated by a flame bent down from the roof of the furnace. Coal could be used in this furnace instead of coke, and much bigger quantities of iron at a time. The carbon is oxidized in the process, and the purified iron collects into lumps, which the workman draws together with a bar and works into a ball weighing about 80 lb., which is then removed.

The demand for iron increased with the call for machines, and the first iron bridge was built in 1788 at Ironbridge over the Severn. (It was still in use in 1895.) So great was the quantity of iron required that in 1800 we were importing it, in spite of the increase in home manufacture.

In 1828 came a still more momentous step forward when J. B. NEILSEN introduced the HOT BLAST instead of using cold air. This reduced the fuel required, and consequently the cost, and enabled raw coal to be used direct. It laid the foundation of the prosperity of the Scotch iron trade, for it made possible the use of the ore known as blackland ironstone, in which Scotland is rich, and of the American because it allowed the use of anthracite coal.

In 1832 T. Oakes greatly improved the shape of the blast-furnace, increased its height from 40 ft. to 60 ft., also its capacity and the pressure of the blast. He gave Staffordshire the predominant position in the industry which it still holds. About the same time J. Hall improved the methods of puddling. By 1834 the iron industry (not the steel) was started on its modern path and ready to supply the ever-enlarging needs of the iron age, now well launched. The last charcoal-furnace in Sussex was blown out in 1827, and though a few lingered on in Scotland and Ulverstone, they were mere survivals.

The following figures give some idea of the increase in production:

In 1740 there were in	England	59	furnaces	producing	17,350	tons
,, 1788	,,	77	,,	,,	61,300	,,
,, 1796	,,	104	,,	,,	108,700	,,
,, 1820	,,	284	,,	,,	400,000	,,
,, 1827	,,	284	,,	,,	690,500	,,
,, 1839	,,	378	,,	,,	1,348,000	,,

3. Next let us look at our oldest industry, WOOL. The first thing to notice is the shift to Yorkshire. It had, as we have seen,[1] already begun. For centuries the West Riding had been the seat of a flourishing woollen manufacture worked on the domestic system. With the coming of machinery it rapidly developed one in worsted. The south-west of England had long had a highly capitalized industry, and it continued prosperous till about 1816; from that time it declined, and Yorkshire grew at its expense. The introduction of machinery was slower in the woollen than in the cotton manufacture. Even when spinning mills were firmly established, and later shearing and finishing factories, the intermediate process of weaving remained with the hand-loom. Hand-weaving of wool persisted much later than of cotton, and was the chief method even as late as 1858. The jenny was introduced in the south-west in 1776, in Yorkshire about 1780, and mules in both areas about 1826. Machinery was never introduced into the still older East Anglian industry, and by 1830 spinning as a domestic craft was dead.

The dates of the introduction of the flying-shuttle illustrate the slow rate at which alterations moved in the old-established industries. They range, even within the south-west district, from 1757 in Gloucestershire to 1822 in Somerset, and when it was introduced the workers were strong enough to secure the same piece-rates as before, thereby securing a 50 per cent. increase of wages. The fight against gig-mills and shearing-frames raged from 1802 to 1809 in the south-west, and till 1814 in Yorkshire. The gig-mills were machines for raising the nap of the cloth, work previously done by beating it with teasels; the shearing-frames had mechanical shears which took the place

[1] See p. 279.

of highly skilled hand-labour. From 1814 onwards the shearman sank lower and lower, and by 1820 had disappeared. One branch of the trade, that of wool-combing for worsted yarn, maintained its opposition to machinery as late as 1825, lingered on for another twenty-five years, vainly competing with the machines the men had tried to keep out, and then it too disappeared.

Effect on the Lives of the Workers. In what follows we shall try to picture the result on the lives of English men and women when the change was complete, or nearly so, remembering, how-

The Prince of Wales has subscribed 10,000*l.* to the National Fund; the Duke of York, half that amount, and each of the Princesses, 1000*l.* a year during the war—a sum which, considering the contracted finances of these lovely and amiable Ladies, is perhaps not less creditable than the princely donation of 45,000*l.* from Mr. Peel, of Manchester, and his two sons.

The Subscription at the Royal Exchange yesterday exceeded one hundred thousand pounds, and that at the Bank nearly amounted to 800,000*l.* The Ladies' Contribution has experienced proportionate increase.

The Cambridge Subscription already amounts to 3880*l.*

At Bath, a few hours after the books were opened 3275*l.* 5*s.* were subscribed; considerable addition has since been made to that sum.

Amongst the many gratifying instances of public spirit at the present period, the following should not pass unnoticed:—The little parish of Ripple, in Kent, has volunteered their services, and engaged gratuitously to furnish our defenders with 400 score of salted pork, should such supply be wanted.

Leicester and Northampton Corporations 500 guineas; the young gentlemen of Rugby School 50 guineas, the masters, &c. 133*l.* more; Hinckley 600*l.*

A Subscription has been instituted in the Post-office, in aid of the Voluntary Contributions. The produce, it is expected, will exceed two thousand pounds. Each person possessing a salary of 700*l.* per annum gives a fourteenth, those of 400*l.* a 20th, 300*l.* a 25th, of 200*l.* a 30th, and all beneath that sum an hundredth part. The Country Postmasters have, considering their means, contributed liberally.

NATIONAL FUND SUBSCRIPTIONS, 1797. See next page.

ever, that social revolutions, even the quickest, take many years, and that the speed varied greatly in different parts of the country and in different industries.

Let us first see what the change looked like from the standpoint of the cultured Englishman of the day. Looking back some fifty years from 1830 he seemed to see the triumph of humanity over matter, a marvellous increase in the power of mankind to surround itself with that material wealth that is the

THE OBSERVER

ORIGINALS.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11.

The Subscription of the Merchants, &c. of the City, which on Friday night amounted to 80,000l. yesterday received an addition of 15 000l.

The Subscription at the Bank yesterday experienced an augmentation of 20,000l. The Duke of Portland directed that his name might be inserted in the patriotic list for the sum of 5,000l. per annum during the war: and Earl Camden notified his intent to contribute the sum of 7,000l.

The Officers of the brigade of Foot Guards, exclusive of their subscription of a day's pay, contribute one thousand guineas in aid of the public service.

The receipts of the play on Friday at Covent Garden in aid of the voluntary contributions, exceeded 500l. The performers, highly to their credit, have instituted a subscription in the company. Messrs. Lewes, Holman, Quick, and others have subscribed 10l. each.

The Corporation of Wigan have abolished all public entertainments for the term of three years. The saving, in addition to 100l. which they have subscribed, to be given in aid of the voluntary contributions.

The Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, have subscribed 2,000l. to the Voluntary Contributions; half to be paid on the 1st of next month, the remainder on the 1st of March. 1799.

The Duke of Buccleugh has expressed his intention to subscribe the sum of 6000l. including what was to be paid by his Grace of taxes imposed by the late triple assessed tax-bill.

The Hon. Thomas Elder has subscribed 200l.

The Corporation of Perth has added 500l. to this patriotic fund. The first battalion of Perthshire Volunteers have given 500 guineas; and the Perthshire Light Dragoons twelve days' pay, amounting to 381l.

The Breadalbane Fencibles have subscribed *one day's pay every month during the continuance of the war*, amounting to about 500l. per annum.

Parochial Meetings have, during the last week, been held generally throughout Kent on the subject of the threatened Invasion, and the people were every where unanimous in testifying their readiness to arm in the event of emergency, and going wherever their services might be required.

At Bath a Meeting is convened to subscribe to the patriotic contributions now carrying on throughout the kingdom.

The Corporation of Saffron Walden have resolved to suspend all public entertainments during the War, and to apply the money so saved to the service of the State.

NATIONAL FUND SUBSCRIPTIONS, February 1798. The newspaper cuttings on this and the facing page illustrate the wealth of the landowners and manufacturers

basis of civilization. The productive power of the human unit had grown tenfold, riches seemed to be pouring forth in a never slackening stream, with endless supplies of clothes, furniture, ornament, of everything that differentiates the outward life of civilized man from that of the savage. A nation which had quadrupled her foreign trade in less than a century must surely be on the high road of prosperity. Workers born in hovels found themselves in middle age the possessors of wealth almost beyond dreams. With the new system all the world had become our market, the trade of Eastern kings our daily commonplace. 'Nowhere does man exercise such dominion over matter,' said Macaulay, voicing the thought of thousands. But the millions of whom Macaulay knew nothing, the men and women and children who directly exercised that dominion, had other thoughts. To them the dominion hardly seemed to be theirs; to themselves they seemed the slaves and not the masters of the machine. For beyond and above all the long hours and low wages of which we shall speak presently the worker hated the constriction of the new life. Long hours he had known, poor wages, overworked children, and wretched premises, but within limits he had been his own master. Economic forces might urge him to work fourteen hours a day at his loom, but he could, if he would, stop and smoke a pipe. He could and did take a day off for work in his garden; even his days of unemployment could be thus made fruitful. His wife and children worked beside him, and hard though it was for all, it had a human value. The new order tied him to a machine. His hours were perhaps no longer, but they were not under his control—a bell summoned him to work, and while the wheels revolved he dared not rest. Day in, day out, his life was ordered for him; always he worked under another, liable for the smallest breach of a discipline to fines imposed by a great impersonal system. A list of nineteen fines ranging from 6*d*. to 6*s*. for offences varying from whistling or opening a window to failing to provide a substitute when sick, appeared in a mill at Tyldesley. The unfortunate man was forbidden to be found dirty at his work and equally forbidden

to wash himself—the fine being 1*s.* in either case. Working in a temperature of 80° F., he might not even send out for water to drink.

'No economist of the day, in estimating the gains and losses of factory employment, ever allowed for the strain and violence that a man suffered in his feelings when he passed from a life in which he could smoke or eat or dig or sleep as he pleased, to one in which somebody turned a key on him, and for 14 hours he had not even the right to whistle.'[1]

Machinery, too, though in a way it lightened man's labour by letting one man produce the work of two or more, had added a strain to work that aged men faster than physical labour of the hardest. It is not surprising that men and women starved at the hand-loom rather than enter the factories.

The hours worked in the early factories were atrocious; in 1825 in and near Manchester the normal day varied from 12½ to 14 hours, sometimes mills worked night and day. In 1824 the workers successfully resisted an attempt at Macclesfield to raise the hours from 12 to 13, including the dinner hour. There were children working in the mills under five years of age, and the men bluntly told the masters 'they had made cripples enough already in Macclesfield'. Eight years earlier they had been worse; to a normal day of 14 hours exclusive of two half-hours for meals, overtime of one or two hours a day was sometimes added for three weeks on end. Sundays were spent from 6 a.m. to noon cleaning the machinery, and the workers in these mills were children. In Leeds woollen-mills in 1830 the hours were 15, less two off for meals; in the mines the hours varied from 8 to 12 in Lancashire and 13 to 18 in Derbyshire.

The wages paid varied greatly, but it is a fair estimate that at least half were below subsistence level; during the years of high prices due to the war they must almost all have been so.

It was not, however, the factory worker who suffered most. Men spinners in factories seem to have made a wage on which it was possible to live, though the employers estimated it at 30*s.*

[1] Hammond, *The Town Labourer*, p. 21.

or more, the men at less than 20*s*. Spinners in Leeds in 1819 struck for six months to prevent a reduction of 5*s*. in the pound on a wage ranging from 20*s*. to 25*s*. ; they were not successful. As we have seen, machinery only indirectly affected the weaver before 1830, since not till then did the power-loom become general. Actually the low level to which the weavers' wages sank helped to delay the introduction of the power-loom, since the saving in cost over hand-work so ill-paid was very small.

From 1788 to the close of the century the hand-weaver experienced a wave of prosperity ; the mules and water-frames were turning out yarn in what seemed miraculous quantity, and the weavers were in great request. These short twelve years have been called 'the golden age of this great trade'. But hand-weaving was easy to learn ; even in 1799 the influx of workers is seen bringing down wages, and by 1816 they were as low as 7*s*. a week. In 1818 the men struck vainly for 9*s*. Silk-weavers of the Midlands were as low as 6*s*. Weavers were, in fact, in a hopeless economic position ; they were trying to maintain a hand industry in competition with a machine one. But the miners were not much better off, though on their efforts rested the whole industrial fabric. Estimates of their wages range from 7*s*. a week to 16*s*. or more, according as they are given by miner or master, but in the big miners' strike of 1831 the coal-owners in the same breath asserted that the miners made more than the minimum 33*s*. a fortnight they asked, and that if it was granted they, the mine-owners, would have to dismiss a quarter of the workers. These, however, were the Northumberland mining aristocracy ; in South Staffordshire the men made 8*s*. 7½*d*. a week, and lead miners worked normally for 7*s*. or 8*s*. It must also be remembered that during much of this time food was at famine price. Some of the distress, inevitable under such sweating, was relieved by the same pernicious system of subsidizing wages from the poor-relief funds, as had been adopted in the rural areas.[1] By 1818 it had taken firm hold of the cotton area. It is obvious that no share of the new wealth of the nation was going to the men whose hands

[1] See p. 328.

CORRECT STATEMENTS,

Shewing the Wages, Deductions, and nett or clear amount of a Weaver's weekly labour.

Statement First.—For 6-4ths Cambrics, 60 Reeds.

Suppose a man weaves a Warp of this description, in five weeks, and receives from the master 8s. per cut, this will amount to one pound twelve shillings.

His weekly receipt will be for weaving one fifth of the Warp	s.	d.
	6	4⅗

His weekly expences will be	s.	d.
Rent, (*if paid*) ...	1	9
Fire	1	0
Sizing Warp.....	0	3
Looming do.....	0	3
Size or Sowen for do	0	3
Soft Soap, Tallow and Oil.....	0	2
Candles.....	0	4
Soap for family washing	0	4
	4	4

This leaves him 2s. 0⅗d. to support himself, wife, and children during seven days!

Statement second.—For a journeyman weaving the same kind of work:—

His weekly receipt as above is.....	s.	d.
	6	4⅗

His weekly deductions are for loom room, &c. one-fourth, or.....	s.	d.
	1	7
Sizing warp.....	0	3
Looming do.	0	3
Candles	0	4
Lodging, cooking, and washing.....	1	6
	3	11

This leaves him 2s. 5⅖d per week, for meat, drink, and clothing!

Statement third.—For ¾ths cambrics, 44 reeds.—Suppose an *aged man* weave a cut per week of this description, and his wife wind his picking:—

Their weekly receipts for weaving and winding	s.	d.
	4	0

Weekly deduction, &c.	s.	d.
Rent	1	9
Fire	0	10
Sizing warp.....	0	3
Looming do.	0	3
Size, or sowen for do.	0	3
Candles	0	4
Soft soap, tallow, and oil.....	0	2
Ditto for family washing	0	2
	4	0

'*By 1816 wages were as low as 7s. a week.*'
Cutting from *The Liverpool Mercury* of Dec. 27, 1816

produced it. The collective wealth of the nation increased at a rate that struck the upper classes dumb with admiration, but left the poor worse off than ever before. All the increase went to the men who provided either the money or the brains or both; the manual labourer ceased to be a human unit, and became raw material to be bought like cotton or wool in the cheapest market.

The question naturally arises, Whence came these thousands of sweated workers? There were four main sources of supply:

(*a*) The most striking fact about the period was the sudden great increase of population. In seventy years the population of England nearly doubled, and it flocked to the new industrial areas, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Staffordshire, and Warwick. The causes were exactly the same in the industrial as in the rural areas. Children became an asset, a man's maximum earning age was early, and he had nothing to look forward to or to induce him to postpone marriage. The standard of life was greatly lowered for the manual worker, and that always tends to increase population. The poor-law system added its quota of inducement in the towns as in the villages.

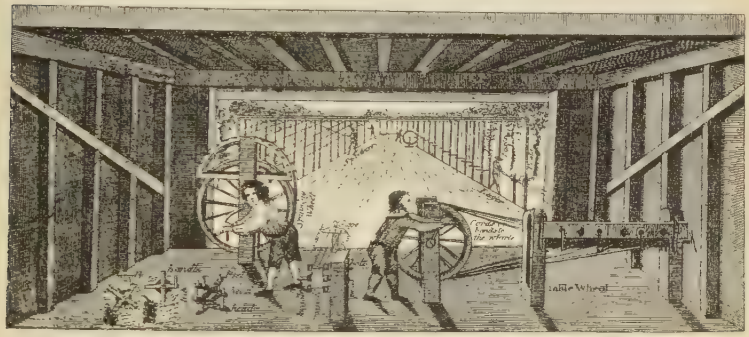
(*b*) The new industrial areas had not only their own increased numbers to deal with, for the surplus population of the country-side that could find no livelihood in their native villages poured into the new town districts and gave the masters an unending stream of labour. It was this that enabled them to grind down wages to a level that meant slow starvation.

(*c*) Another tributary was supplied by the condition of Ireland. She had suffered with England during the Napoleonic wars, and was not able to benefit by the new markets secured by England's naval supremacy. The Union tied her helpless to the English industrial policy which was rapidly being shaped in the interests of the manufacturing industry, and, thanks to England's past jealousy, Ireland had no thriving industries except linen, which was not in demand by foreign countries. The Union also increased the number of absentee landlords and thereby the poverty of the workers. So Irish immigrants helped to pull down the

standard of life of the English weaver. In 1826 there were said to be 30,000 in Manchester alone.

(*d*) Lastly, in 1815 came the disbanding of large armies, which had to be absorbed among the workers.

Such was the effect of the great change on the men manual workers ; what of the women ? They, too, were swept into the factories. Their old occupations were gone : the cottager's wife



CHILDREN IN A ROPE FACTORY

had lost her acre or so of land, her cow, her poultry, and her pig ; the spinster no longer spun, machines worked by men or tended by children spun miles of yarn where she had spun yards ; her husband's wages could not keep her, so she followed to the factory. And women's work, unprotected by law or organization, became a lever as usual to drag down the men's rates. Their best wage seems to have been about 8*s.* a week, and we read of it as low as 2*s.* 6*d.* The early power-loom weavers were women. In many districts women and children could get work in the factories when their men could not. Women worked in the mines throughout this period.

The crowning scandal of the industrial revolution was the use made of children. We have seen already that childhood had been for many centuries a hard school ; long hours, continuous labour, often probably beyond its strength, was its usual

lot. Children of four or five were expected to contribute to their keep by helping in the home industries or on the land. But their lot was mitigated by the consideration that most parents have for their own, and at least their work was subsidiary to that of adults. The regular employment of crowds of children dates from the time of Arkwright's spinning machinery. This required water-power to drive it; it was necessary to build mills by the side of streams, often in places far from towns or even villages. At the same time the machinery required little skill to work, and the new adventurers looked round for children. A brilliant idea came to them, and they procured pauper apprentices from London. The administration of the Poor Law had sunk to a degraded depth; not many pauper babies outlived their first year, and the overseers' main object was to get rid of those who did, at least expense to the rates and trouble to themselves. It was an attractive scheme to ship off a hundred or so of these unwanted ones where no one need bother further how they lived or died. The manufacturer undertook to feed and clothe his 'apprentices', and one was even willing to take one idiot in every twenty to secure his slaves. They were bound from the age of seven upwards till they were twenty-one, and lived, when not in the mill, in prentice houses built close to it. A model mill near Manchester worked its children seventy-four hours a week, the majority fifteen hours a day. Many mills worked day and night, and the day children occupied the beds from which the night ones had just risen. This method had the merit of shortening the hours, though night-work must have seriously injured many of the workers.

'A vivid picture of life in these prentice mills was given before the 1816 committee by a certain Mr. John Moss, governor of the workhouse at Preston. For a year, from February 1814 to March 1815, he had been master of about 150 parish apprentices at a cotton mill at Backbarrow in Lancashire. Most of these children came from London, a few from Liverpool. The London children came at ages ranging from 7 to 11, the Liverpool children came from 8 to 15; all were bound till they were 21. Their regular working hours, Saturdays included, were from 5 a.m.

till 8 p.m., and, with the exception of half an hour at 7 a.m. for breakfast, and half an hour for dinner, they were working continuously the whole time. They were, however, allowed to eat something whilst working in the afternoon. There were no seats in the mill. When lost time had to be made up, the hours were from 5 a.m. till 9 or 10 p.m., and this sometimes lasted for three weeks on end. There were two mills, and if the water was insufficient for both, one was worked with day and night shifts. On Sundays, always some, and sometimes all, were employed from 6 a.m. till noon cleaning machinery. Those who were not so employed were supposed to go to church, three miles away. It is not surprising to read that church-going was unpopular, and that the children would absent themselves under pretence of being wanted at the mill. At night Mr. Moss regularly inspected their beds "because there were always some of them missing, some sometimes might be run away, others sometimes I have found have been asleep in the mill". The children often lay down on the mill floor and went to sleep before their supper. The bedding was simple and unclean; a blanket to lie on and another blanket, with a horse cover to throw over them. During his time sheets were introduced. Nobody from London ever came to look after the children, who, according to Mr. Moss, developed into depraved characters. Once, before Mr. Moss's time, when the mill had stopped payment under its former proprietors, the children were taken from the mill in a cart and turned adrift near the sands on the Lancaster road.'[1]

An epidemic of putrid fever at Radcliffe in 1784 drew public attention to this scandal, and some magistrates, headed by those of Manchester, refused to sanction indentures of parish apprentices to cotton mills. But the supply from London and elsewhere did not cease. The 1802 Act of Sir Robert Peel, which will be given in detail later,[2] was good in intention, but it was quite without effect. At last in 1816 an Act was passed limiting the distance within which pauper children could be apprenticed to forty miles. Lancashire had to look elsewhere for its child-labour.

Meanwhile, steam-power was taking the mills away from the streams to the towns, and as the wages of adults sank and war prices rose, the factory operatives were forced to let their children

[1] Hammond, *The Town Labourer*, pp. 146–7. [2] See p. 372.

go to work. The hand-weavers, in particular, found that they could not do without their children's labour, and parish relief was even refused to those who had children over six who could go to the mill. Many went at five and even four. These babies were employed to creep under the machines to collect the cotton waste. The children's hours were the same as those of adults, fourteen hours a day, only they did not get the dinner hour three or four days a week, because they were needed to clean the machines, eating their food in the dust and flue of the work-rooms. Most of the children were piecers, i. e. they pieced together the broken threads. Fielden, a humane employer, who worked hard to better things, found by actual measurement that a child in the twelve hours walked twenty miles—no seats were allowed.

Such was the normal life of the mill child, but in times of stress work went on much longer. From 3 a.m. to 10 p.m. was possible, and one mill at least worked from 3.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. all the summer. It is even recorded of one employer that his mill worked for two months on end from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., and twice a week all through the night as well. It is obvious that children could only be forced to such work by cruelty. Even then it is difficult to understand how they held out. Sometimes they didn't, and dozing, fell into the machine ; happy were those who did not wake again. West Indian slave-owners were shocked at what they saw in English mills. It was asserted that the parents were as much to blame as the employers, and no doubt many were brutal and callous ; there was little in their lives to make them otherwise. But there were others who carried the children to the mill with breaking hearts, knowing it to be the only alternative to starvation. We reach the end of our period before any effective protection was given to the factory child.

In the mines matters were worse. Boys were employed in all mines, girls in many districts. Their chief business was as trappers or fillers. As trappers they had to shut and open the doors on which the ventilation and safety of the whole mine

THE CONDITION

OF

THE WEST INDIA SLAVE

CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF

THE INFANT SLAVE

In our English Factories.

WITH FIFTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE GRAVER OF

ROBERT CRUIKSHANK.

"Truth is strange,—stranger than Fiction."

NEGRO SLAVERY. | ENGLISH LIBERTY

LONDON:
W. KIDD, 14, CHANDOS STREET, WEST-STRAND;
AND
SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, STATIONERS'-HALL-COURT.

West Indian slave-owners were shocked at what they saw in English mills'

depended. This responsible work was done by children from five to eight years of age, sitting twelve hours in the dark. In the Report of the Commission on Children's Employment in 1842, a girl is quoted thus : ' I'm a trapper in the Gamber Pit. I have to trap without a light and I'm scared. I go at four and sometimes half-past three in the morning and come out at five and half-past. I never go to sleep. Sometimes I sing when I've light, but not in the dark. I dare not sing then.' [1] William Richards of South Wales, aged 7½, also gave evidence : ' I been down almost three years. When I first went down I couldn't keep my eyes open ; I don't fall asleep now ; I smokes my pipe ; smokes half a quartern a week.' The same Commission describes the lot of the fillers. These boys and girls filled the trucks with the coal the men had hewn and pushed them along to the foot of the shaft. In some mines they were harnessed to the truck and drew it. They were joined to the truck by a girdle with a chain that passed between their legs, and so they crawled, dragging the truck. We are told that not many under six or seven years of age were employed in this particular way. Some of the passages were only 18 inches high. These were the conditions in 1842 ; they had been worse earlier. Then the hours had been seventeen to eighteen.

The story of the chimney-sweeps has often been told, perhaps because the callousness that sacrificed the lives and happiness of children to the aesthetic taste of a few rich men strikes us more than that which was excused on the ground of England's commercial supremacy. The boy sweeps were apprenticed young, at four or five years old, and were usually paupers or children people wanted to get rid of. They were forced up the dark suffocating windings by the still greater fear of cruelty, some masters even lighting a fire behind them ! Their elbows and knees broke into sores, and it was months before the flesh got hard and callous. They lived in soot, slept on bags of soot, and were very lucky if they were washed once a week—many were never washed at all. Always there was danger of falling and

[1] Children's Employment Commission, *First Report—Mines*, 1842, p. 71.

FREDERICK LEITH,

Apprentice and Foreman for the last Thirteen Years, and

WILLIAM SAUNDERS,

Successors to MARY LATIMORE,

Chimney Sweepers & Nightmen,

No. 12, EDEN STREET,

Hampstead Road, near the Adam and Eve.

F. L. & W. S. respectfully inform their Friends and the Public in general that they execute the above Business in all its Branches, in the best manner, Extinguish Chimnies when on fire, with care and safety—Clean all sorts of Smoke Jacks, and Smokey Coppers; clean cloths kept for the Upper Apartments, and small boys for Register Stoves.

Chimnies Swept with a Machine if Required.

Those Ladies and Gentlemen who may honor them with their Orders, may rest assured of the same being performed with the utmost care and diligence (as they attend to it themselves), and their favours gratefully acknowledged by their obedient servants,

FREDERICK LEITH, and
WILLIAM SAUNDERS.

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Established upwards of 60 Years,

MEMBER of the United Society of Master Chimney Sweeps, for ameliorating and bettering the Condition of their Climbing Boys.

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A SWEEP'S business card

being suffocated in the pile of soot that they had swept past them to the bend. Often they were sent up to extinguish a chimney-fire. Many of them became deformed. In the teeth of facts like these it took forty-six years of agitation before even the first Act to stop the horror was passed; though there were machines which could take the children's place in all but a few chimneys in rich men's houses.

It is to be noted that the greatest misery was in the mills of men who had been workers themselves. The new system gave openings to men of the aggressive, enterprising kind, and 'any one who could borrow a little money and was prepared to work like a slave and to live like a slave-master', could force his way to wealth and power. Having no reserve of capital, no tradition of responsibility, assigning his success to his own superior character rather than to the chance of circumstance, he believed entirely in the right of the strongest to force others to contribute to his wealth. Only by sweating could he overcome his lack of capital, and his mental attitude was that of the fighter, he neither asked nor gave quarter. He as little belonged to a civilized era as the robber baron of the Middle Ages.

Early Factory Legislation. The factory legislation of this period dealt solely with children, and in its early stages was really an extension of the Poor Law. The whole blame for the terrible conditions of the child worker of the period must not be put on the new system of industry. Throughout the eighteenth century the administration of the Poor Law had been both lax and brutal. Pauper children in particular were regarded as public nuisances, to be disposed of as quickly as possible as long as they were got off the rates. Their fate in the early factories was only a little worse than when they worked singly for careless or brutal masters in farm or cottage. It made their fate more certain, their drudgery more rigid, and lessened their chances of finding favour with a kindly master, and it shut them up in what was practically a prison. The change for the worse was on the spiritual rather than the material side.

The first Act was due largely to the work of Dr. Percival of

Manchester. In 1784 an infectious fever broke out in the Radcliffe cotton works, and he was asked by the magistrates to investigate. His report was such that Manchester magistrates refused to apprentice pauper children to factories. Other fevers broke out, and in 1795 Dr. Percival recommended legislation

Brutal Assault.—Chimney Sweeping.—The trial of *William Moles* lately took place at Hicks's-hall. Our readers will recollect that the prisoner was a master sweeper, and lately stood his trial at the Old Bailey, on charge of murder, of having, by brutal treatment, caused the death of John Hewlings, a child of five or six years of age, his apprentice. He was, however, acquitted of this charge, but retained on an indictment for an assault on the same child.

After the court had summed up the evidence, the jury instantaneously returned a verdict of *guilty*. The court, after severely animadverting on the atrocity of the prisoner's guilt, sentenced him to *two years' imprisonment*.

On Tuesday the 13th inst. a master chimney-sweeper was brought before the magistrates, charged with the ill treatment of one of his boys, a child of little more than five years of age. It appeared, that on the morning of that day, the child had remained more than two hours in a chimney, rather than encounter the severity of his master's anger. The offender was ordered to find bail for his appearance to answer any indictment which might be preferred against him; this however he has not yet been able to do, and therefore remains in prison. We hope it will be a warning to similar unfeeling characters.

From *The Liverpool Mercury*, July 19, 1816, and May 23, 1817.

and control. Abuses were not confined to factories, apprentices were liable to all kinds of ill-treatment, and the carelessness of the Poor Law overseers almost passes belief. In 1802 Sir Robert Peel, who had himself employed children, with a rare courage brought in and carried the first Factory Act in the guise of the

Health and Morals of Apprentices Act.[1] Its chief clauses were :

1. Apprentices not to work more than twelve hours a day, and not at night after 1804.

2. Measures were to be taken to educate apprentices.

3. Boys and girls to sleep apart, and not more than two in a bed.

4. Apprentices to attend church once a month.

5. *All* factories, whether with apprentices or not, to be white-washed once a year, and to be properly ventilated.

6. A copy of this Act to be hung up in every cotton mill.

Though justices were empowered to inflict fines of £2 to £5 for breaches of these regulations, the Act was utterly ineffective for want of machinery to enforce it. Some magistrates tried to make it effective, and at least helped to educate public opinion. The introduction of steam made pauper apprentices less important,[2] and ' free ' children took their place. The next Act was the work of Robert Owen. Experiments in his own mills had convinced him that exploiting child-labour was not only brutal but also uneconomic. By continual agitation he obtained from Sir Robert Peel a commission to inquire, *and after two years' investigation* this body decided that fourteen or fifteen hours a day in overheated rooms *was* detrimental to children. In 1819 Owen obtained an Act, watered down from his original draft but still something. By this no child under nine could be employed, and those under sixteen were limited to twelve hours a day, exclusive of meal-times. But the Act referred only to cotton mills, and left the inspection to the justices as before. The chief value of the Act was its admission that children needed protection. In 1825 and 1831 amending Acts were passed, attempting somewhat feebly to enforce that of 1819, which was almost universally ignored. Manufacturers and their relatives were not to act as justices in cases under the Act. That of 1831 raised the age of the twelve-hour limit to eighteen, and of night-work to twenty-one.

[1] The Act applied to cotton and woollen factories only.

[2] See p. 365.

In 1830 RICHARD OASTLER had begun his letters in the *Leeds Mercury* on 'Yorkshire Slavery'. In 1831–2 MICHAEL SADLER introduced his TEN HOURS BILL. This was shelved to a Select Committee, and Sadler wore himself out in his effort to bring evidence from all parts of the kingdom. He lost his seat in the General Election of 1832, and his place on the committee was taken by Lord Ashley (afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury). In spite of a second attempt to get rid of the matter by appointing a special commission to investigate on the spot, the FACTORY ACT OF 1833 was passed, and was the first effective piece of that legislative control of industry which has been growing mightily for nearly a century. Its effectiveness was due to a suggestion of the better manufacturers, viz. that paid officials should be appointed to see it carried out. Its chief clauses were:

1. No night-work by workers under eighteen in cotton, wool, linen, or silk mills, except in lace-making.

2. Twelve hours a day and sixty-nine a week to be the limit for workers under eighteen.

3. No child under nine to be employed in silk mills.

4. After 1834 no child under 13 to be employed for more than forty-eight hours a week or nine a day.

5. One and a half hours to be allowed for meals, and children not to remain in the mill during meal time.

6. Four Government inspectors to be appointed, with power to enter the mills.

7. The penalties were fines of £1–£20, and the inspectors were given powers co-ordinate with those of the Justices of the Peace.

It had taken over twenty-five years to secure for the children a sixty-nine hour working week.

No serious attempt was made during the period to limit the hours of adult labour, though the beginnings of a ten-hour movement for *all* workers are to be found as early as 1825.

The names of some of the pioneer workers on behalf of children should be remembered; besides Sadler, Lord Ashley, Robert Owen, and Richard Oastler, and to some extent Peel, there were men such as G. S. Bull and J. R. Stephens, enlightened clergy

of the time, Fielden an employer, John Doherty, George Condy, and Philip Grant.

Beginnings of Trade Unionism. It is time to ask what defence the worker had against the crushing pressure of the new system. The most obvious, and the most difficult to achieve, was com-

THE CURSE

OF THE

FACTORY SYSTEM;

OR,

A short Account of the origin of Factory Cruelties, of the attempts to protect the Children by Law; of their present Sufferings; our duty towards them; Injustice of Mr. Thomson's Bill; the Folly of the Political Economists; a Warning against sending the Children of the South into the Factories of the North.

" What he was disposed to recommend was, a regulation " that no children should be so employed under the age of " ten years, and that the duration of their labour should be " limited to twelve hours and a half per diem, including the " time for education and meals, which would leave *ten* " *hours for laborious employment.*"—*The late* Sir ROBERT PEEL'S *speech on introducing the Factory Bill in* 1815.—*Debates.*

" Such indiscriminate and unlimited employment of the " poor, consisting of a great proportion of the inhabitants " of trading districts, will be attended with effects to the " rising generation so serious and alarming, that I cannot " contemplate them without dismay; and thus that great effort of British ingenuity, whereby the machinery of our " manufactures has been brought to such perfection, instead " of being a blessing to the nation, will be converted into its " BITTEREST CURSE.—The late Sir ROBERT PEEL, *in his Evidence before the House of Commons Committee in* 1816, p. 133.

By JOHN FIELDEN, M.P. for Oldham.
And Manufacturer at Todmorden, in Lancashire.

HALIFAX;
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' The names of some . . . should be remembered . . . Fielden an employer.'

bination, the only real resource of the weak in a battle with the strong. Workers' combinations are now called Trade Unions, but the name came later than the thing. If we accept the definition of the historians of Trade Unionism, Mr. and Mrs. Webb, we find it first in existence about 1700, but it was the new system after 1780 that spread the movement all over the country.

'A Trade Union, as we understand the term, is a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives.'[1] A Trade Union was apt to arise whenever groups of wage-earners met, whether for pleasure or business. Sometimes a meeting for a social evening, sometimes a sudden strike, gave rise to a more or less permanent organization. In some trades public-houses were used as places where vacant jobs could be heard of, and these 'houses of call' gave the necessary opportunity. One of the earliest of such continuous associations is that of our old friends the hatters or felt-makers. We found them in 1604 triumphantly extricating themselves from the tyranny of the merchant haberdashers. But it did not take long for these small masters to turn themselves into capitalists, and in 1667 we find the journeymen combining to petition the aldermen against the Court of the Company. The Court of aldermen decided that they could not have combinations of workmen dictating wages, and a wage-list was drawn up jointly by both disputant parties and confirmed by the aldermen. Over the list were many disputes, and the journeymen were on the whole successful in maintaining their standard; we find them about 1771 organizing the trade throughout the country.

The capitalist wool industry of the West of England gives examples of combinations of wage-earners all through the eighteenth century. These early associations, however, consisted of skilled workers, intent, like the mediaeval gildsmen, on keeping their craft a properly paid monopoly. The unskilled labourer was rather their enemy than otherwise, since to admit him to the craft was to lower their own wage and status. With the coming of machinery things altered. At first the craftsman tried to put into effect the laws that protected him from exploitation; he failed, and during the fight found his standard beaten down to the level of the unskilled. Obviously, he would have to join with these to resist the greed of the new masters, and

[1] *The History of Trade Unionism*, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, p. 1, 1920 edition.

factory life made this easier. A hundred men meeting daily in one place to work could keep in touch better than hand-workers in their homes. Moreover, the gulf was deepening between masters and men, all control was passing to the former, the workmen of all kinds were becoming 'hands'. It is from this moment that modern Trade Unionism springs.

The difficulties facing these early Unions were great.

(*a*) The masters were acting in two ways that affected their members adversely; they were using unlimited numbers of apprentices and they were constantly lowering piecework rates. In both matters the early Unions turned to the law to protect them. Up to 1756 such appeals for the magistrates to fix wages or to compel the masters to limit apprentices had usually been effective. But suddenly the 'House of Commons exchanged its policy of mediaeval protection for one of "Administrative Nihilism".'[1] From 1757 Parliament refused to regulate industry, and in 1777 removed the limitation of apprentices in the feltmakers' industry. It was obvious that the employer had the ear of the Government, and indeed there was no getting away from the fact that the new processes did *not* require a seven years' apprenticeship. The workers had a grievance, a very real one; their standard of life was being lowered badly, but they mistook at first the remedy. Something they thought might be done with the old unrepealed laws, and they tried to set them in motion. The bias of the courts in favour of the new masters made this effort fruitless. An appeal to Parliament to enforce the laws with regard to fixing wages resulted in their total repeal in 1813, and next year the Elizabethan Statute of Apprentices went too.

(*b*) It must not be thought that there were no humane or far-seeing men among the employers who would gladly have raised the conditions of their workers, but they were tied by the actions of the others. In a competitive system the price is set by the lowest rate, and the master who underpaid his workers to starvation point and worked his machinery sixteen hours or more

[1] Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 51.

a day could undersell those who would have liked to use humaner methods. With Parliament determined not to interfere to coerce the bad ones the good ones were helpless.

(*c*) One of the most striking features of the story of these years is the bad faith of many of the employers. When force failed, as it sometimes did, they resorted to treachery. There are many instances that could be quoted. In 1815 the seamen of the north-east coast struck against the persistent under-manning of ships. The men had public opinion behind them, but the shipowners admitted in the presence of a Home Office representative that if they had to make concessions they would only keep them till public wrath had blown over. The strike was eventually put down by the military, and, though the shipowners had undertaken to send crews of a certain size, a Sunderland firm did not hesitate to embark the required number in eight of their ships, put out to sea, and then re-land the extra men. In 1810 the miners had agreed to forgo their claim for a minimum nine days' work a fortnight if the mine was unfit for working owing to accident or any other cause. After three days idle they were to receive *2s. 6d.* a day. The owners in slack times adopted the plan of working one day and closing down three! Sheridan had secured a clause in the Act of 1800 to allow arbitration in wage disputes. Masters and men had to appoint two arbitrators, but the Act did not compel the arbitrators to act, and when the masters discovered this they appointed some one living far away who did not intend to act.

(*d*) But the main obstacle to Trade Union development was the Combination Laws. Associations to raise wages were illegal in common law, were offences against the Conspiracy Laws, and also against certain special laws, of which there were said to be forty in existence. The idea behind these laws was that such combinations were rebellion against the order of the State or the municipality which controlled wages. When the State refused any longer to control wages, there was no case left for these laws, but they remained in force and could be put in motion by interested employers. But the growth of combination among

the workers made the masters anxious not to be dependent on the interpretation of old laws even by willing judges, and in 1799 a Act was promoted to put down the strike of millwrights. Pitt, however, introduced a Bill to cover all trades, and in twenty-four days it was rushed through Parliament. Benjamin Hobhouse and Lord Holland opposed it in vain. Next year, 1800, the Bill was modified a little, largely at the instance of Sheridan. The result was that not only were strikes rendered illegal, but for a little group of four or five workmen to ask jointly for a rise of wages was to expose themselves to prosecution and imprisonment. They were even forced, contrary to the custom of English law, to give evidence against themselves. Even when the employers recognized a society the men could be and often were prosecuted. In at least one instance men were imprisoned for two years for meeting at the request of some of the better employers to try to arrange to refuse work for those paying wages below the current rate. To attend any meeting for raising wages or shortening hours or inducing any one else to attend was to be liable, on conviction by any magistrate (who might be the accused's own employer), to three months' imprisonment.

(*c*) Lastly, the men had to fight rings of employers. The Combination Laws were supposed to apply equally to the masters, but in practice no attempt was made to enforce them in this direction, and the masters openly made agreements against their workers. There is no case on record of a master being punished under the Act.

All these difficulties tended to drive the Unions underground. Many disguised themselves as Friendly Societies or Benefit Clubs, in which workers insured themselves against sickness or unemployment. Not all these were Trade Unions, but it was easy to combine the two objects and conceal the existence of one of them. Many of the employers objected as much to Friendly Societies as to trade combinations for fighting purposes. It is also not surprising that under such conditions the early Unions were often very temporary. A big strike would increase their membership, its failure would cause the disappearance of

the society. Any success they might attain depended largely on the skill and honesty of the leaders, also on their powers of endurance. Considering the illiterate state of the bulk of the nation, the lack of leisure, and the exhausting nature of their toil, the number of fine leaders thrown up in the struggle is surprising. Such men were GRAVENER HENSON, who led the Nottingham framework knitters and was imprisoned for eighteen months without trial during the 1817–18 suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; the pitman, THOMAS HEPBURN, who won by his skilled leading the great strike of 1831, was defeated by the cholera and the rashness of insubordinate followers in 1832, and was then forced to retire from all public work as a condition of being allowed to earn his living. He lived for another forty years, long enough to see the men for whom he had worked with their feet well set on the path to that state of solidarity which to-day makes the Miners' the most powerful Union in the world. A third and more brilliant representative of the coming order was JOHN DOHERTY. Born in Ireland in 1799, he entered a cotton mill in Larne at the age of ten. In 1816 he went to Manchester and soon became a leader among the men. In 1829 he led the great strike of the Hyde spinners, and its failure after six months forced him to the conclusion that small district Unions could not fight successfully. He organized then first a Union of cotton spinners throughout the United Kingdom, and, though this was not successful for long, Doherty conceived the still bigger project of a 'Trades Union', i.e. a Union of all the trades in the country. This ambitious project roused the middle class and their press to a state of panic, but it was too early yet to enrol the whole working class in one solid phalanx, and the Union petered out. He published two papers, one of which, *The Voice of the People*, sold at *7d.* weekly, is said to have had a circulation of 30,000. Eventually he set up in business as a printer and bookseller. He was acute enough to see that the Reform of Parliament in 1832 would do nothing to help the manual worker, and to say openly that no reform was possible till humanity ceased to be subordinated to machinery.

When the workers found that all attempts to get wages fixed

by public enactment failed, they began an agitation for a minimum wage. In 1808 the cotton operatives, backed ostensibly by many of the masters, brought forward a Bill to regulate wages in cotton weaving. From the first it had no chance, and Sir Robert Peel, who had contributed £31 10*s.* towards the fund for its promotion, opposed its passage in the House. Against the Bill it was argued that abilities were not equal, that many workmen would be dismissed, and that the real trouble was that too high wages had attracted too many to the trade, that, if left alone, wages always found their proper level. This estimate of 6*s.* a week as too high wages exasperated Lancashire, however reasonable it may have appeared in Westminster; riots followed, and then a strike, which was successful in raising wages for about a month. From that time onwards this demand takes a foremost place in all agitations. It was more than once supported by leading employers.

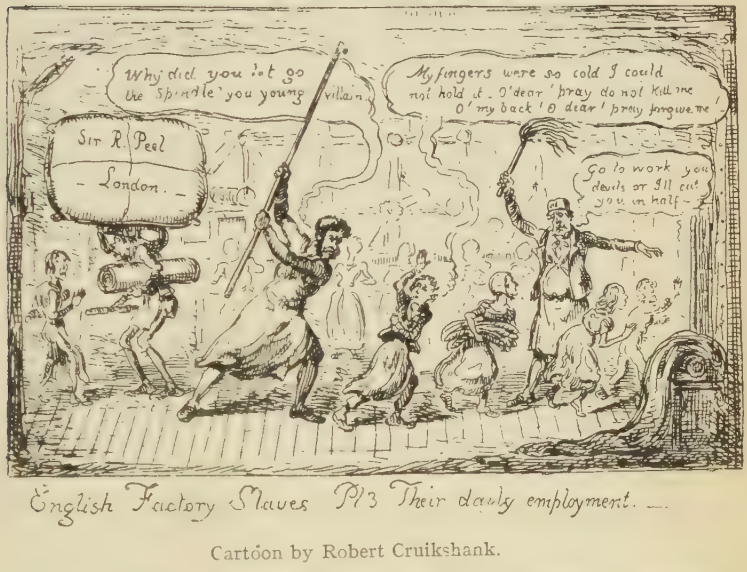
The masters' chief weapon against the Unions was what was known as 'the presentation of the document', i.e. they tried to make workmen sign an agreement not to belong to any Union. The worst period for the workers was from 1816 to 1829. On the declaration of peace, prices fell and a concerted movement was made by the employers to cut wages; at the same time there came a competition in cutting prices, and wages reached their limit. There followed the agitations of 1818, Peterloo, and the Six Acts, which will be described in a later chapter.[1] Then came the agitation for the repeal of the Combination Acts, which was effected in 1824 and 1825.

The injustice of these Acts had long been patent; they placed the wage-earner entirely at the mercy of the worst of the manufacturers. Cases such as the following were typical. A cotton weaver of Stockport, Joseph Sherwin, gave evidence before the Select Committee, that a master of a weaving factory one winter docked his labourers of 3*d.* per loom, i.e. 6*d.* to 9*d.* a week, for light, on a wage of 8*s.*, forgot to take off the reduction in summer, and as winter returned took off another 3*d.* per loom. The

[1] See pp. 418, 423.

workers, twelve women and eleven men, left work, were prosecuted, and given a month's imprisonment. Often, of course, the threat of prosecution prevented the workers offering any resistance to a reduction of wages. As long as the Combination Laws were on the Statute Book there was no freedom for the wage-earner.

The story of their repeal is almost a romance. The hero is


Why did you not go the Spindle you young villain
My fingers were so cold I could not hold it. O dear pray do not kill me O my back O dear pray forgive me
Sir R. Peel
London
Go to work you devils or I'll cut you in half
English Factory Slaves Pl3 Their daily employment.

Cartoon by Robert Cruikshank.

Francis Place, a master tailor with a successful business at Charing Cross. About 1814 he began a campaign for freedom of combination by collecting innumerable cases of the tyranny of the laws. Later he gained the support of McCulloch, editor of the *Scotsman*, and of Joseph Hume, leader of a section of Radicals. With their help a public opinion in favour of freedom was gradually built up, and in 1823 Hume succeeded in inveigling Huskisson and Peel into setting up a Select Committee, to examine three questions, of which the combinations of workmen was regarded by Peel as a negligible third. With Hume as

chairman and Place pulling wires in the background (he was not even allowed in the room, since, as was pointed out, he was neither a Member of Parliament nor a gentleman), the Committee set about establishing the evidence of the tyranny of the Combination Laws. Evidence was brought by Place from all parts of the country, the witnesses were put up at his house and carefully prepared for the ordeal before them, while Hume was kept supplied with a précis of the proceedings fully analysed, so that the whole mass of the evidence should be available at any moment. Never was a political movement more skilfully manipulated. The result was a series of resolutions in favour of complete freedom, and a Bill repealing the Combination Laws was hustled through both Houses in the last week of the 1824 session. Unfortunately, the workers thought the millenium had arrived, and that the best way to celebrate it was to strike for higher wages. The governing classes suddenly realized that they had been hoodwinked and a strong reaction set in. In 1825 a fresh Committee was appointed, and Hume got no chance of packing it, nor of ordering its procedure. The intention was to repeal the 1824 Act after the minimum of inquiry. But they had reckoned without Place. With his help Hume was able to controvert the exaggerations of the masters, while at the same time, at his instigation, the Trade Union leaders organized an agitation throughout the country. The Act of the previous year was modified, but not repealed, and associations to regulate wages and hours of work were henceforth legal. Trade Unions were still, as we shall see, heavily handicapped, but at least they attained to legitimate existence.

The great burst of Trade Union energy in 1825 was followed by a period of bad trade till 1829. So great was the distress that many factory workers were only kept alive by charity. The masters lowered wages and dismissed employees, and the Unions were far too weak to fight successfully on a falling market. The remaining four years of this period are marked by the attempts to organize the workers in one ' Trades Union ', as they called it—what is now known as the ' One Big Union ', already

referred to in connexion with John Doherty. The 'National ssociation for the Protection of Labour', founded in 1830, is d to have reached a membership of 100,000, but by 1832 it d disappeared. Another ambitious attempt was the organiza- ion of a Builders' Union to include Unions of all the seven building trades. In 1833 it held a delegate meeting in Manchester lasting six days and attended by 270 delegates representing 30,000 workers. Their hopes were unlimited, the millennium seemed at hand, but the plant had grown too rapidly, and it had few roots. The period 1832–4 covers the most remarkable growth of workers' organization in the whole history of Trade Unions. The cotton operatives agitated for an eight hours' day; the woollen workers were resisting a lock-out by the masters, who were trying to exclude Union men; the Potters' Union in three years had grown to 8,000 members; and in 1834 Owen started 'The Grand National Consolidated Trades Union', hich aimed at absorbing all existing Unions. In a few weeks is said to have admitted half a million members, and a rage for ades Unionism swept over the country. But lock-outs and ikes followed everywhere, and the funds of the Union were ined by innumerable small battles. The 'Derby turn-out', en 1,500 men were locked out for refusing to give up the ion, lasted four months, and was a complete triumph for the nployers. The press worked up public feeling against the Union, and when the London gas stokers struck and Westminster vas in partial darkness, middle-class feeling rose to boiling-point. At the same moment the conviction of the six Dorchester labourers for taking an oath fell like a bomb from the sky on the Trade Union world.

To explain this event we must go back a little. All the early combinations of workmen seem to have bound themselves to fidelity by elaborate oaths and gruesome ceremony. The oath is not surprising, since the Combination Laws placed each man's liberty at the mercy of his fellows, but the ritual, which reached ts highest elaboration about 1830, seems to us mere childish lay. Some of it was traditional from the days of craft gilds,

some borrowed from Freemasonry, some just the effort of illiterate men to be impressive even at the risk of being ridiculous.

'Besides the opening prayer, and religious hymns sung at intervals, these "initiation pacts" consisted of questions and responses by the dramatis personae in quaint doggerel and were brought to a close by the new members taking a solemn oath of loyalty and secrecy. Officers clothed in surplices, inner chambers into which the candidates were admitted blindfolded, a skeleton, drawn sword, battle axes and other mystic "properties" enhanced the sensational solemnity of this fantastic performance.'[1]

The extraordinary thing is that the governing classes seem to have taken these ceremonies as seriously as the performers, and regarded them as evidence of a general nihilist conspiracy to break up society. Now there happened to be on the Statute Book some laws which made the taking of secret oaths unlawful, and when the 'Grand National Consolidated Trades Union', which had one of these fantastic ceremonies of initiation, began to spread even to agricultural labourers, it occurred to some one to bring this legal weapon into action. We have seen what was the state of the agricultural labourer, ground down by the farmers and by the operation of the Corn Laws, and demoralized by the Poor Law. The 1830 riots[2] had been brutally punished and the labourers were in a state of sullen despair. To them came the new hope of a new Union and a consequent raising of wages to 10*s*. But the Dorset farmers repented their agreement, and next year reduced them shilling by shilling to 7*s*. The labourers turned, and under the inspiration of the 'Grand Consolidated' formed a village club with the full and elaborate ritual. There was no secrecy about it (an open order was given for a figure of Death 6 ft. high!), and at the instance of the farmers six leading members were arrested on the charge of taking illegal oaths. No charge of intimidation or even of striking was made, but after a brief trial the judge sentenced them to transportation for seven years. The Government seized the chance, and hustled

[1] Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 127.
[2] See p. 424.

the prisoners out of the country. But the workers and their leaders were not so easily browbeaten. The Grand Consolidated organized a monster demonstration in London and got up a petition signed by a quarter of a million people. The Radical party took up the monstrous injustice, and after two years' agitation the Government gave way and the sentences were remitted, though they managed to keep the men from returning for another two years. But the 'Grand Consolidated' was meanwhile breaking up; a number of vain strikes undermined its power, and the central control was not strong enough to prevent reckless enterprises of the amalgamated lodges; before the end of 1834 the forces were scattered.

'The records of the rise and fall of the "New Unionism" of 1830–4 leave us conscious of a vast enlargement in the ideas of the workers, without any corresponding alteration in their tactics in the field. In council they are idealists, dreaming of a new heaven and a new earth; humanitarians, educationalists, socialists, moralists; in battle they are still the struggling, half-emancipated serfs of 1825, armed only with the rude weapons of the strike and boycott; sometimes feared and hated by the propertied classes; sometimes merely despised; always oppressed and miserably poor.'[1]

Attacks on Machinery. There were, however, times when the misery of the worker became so acute that argument and agitation seemed too slow a method to meet the need. Then we get riots and outrages in which ignorant men and women turned fiercely on the hated wheels that naturally seemed the immediate cause of their distress. The earliest machine-breaking riots were against Arkwright's spinning machinery, and in 1779 his mill near Chorley was fired and a loss of £4,400 involved. The elder Peel's works at Altham were also visited and Arkwright's machinery destroyed. Throughout Lancashire were raids on spinning-jennies with more than twenty spindles. On the whole public sympathy, at this date, was with the rioters. In most of the textile industries the expansion of trade for some years absorbed the displaced hand-worker, and little further objection

[1] Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, pp. 153–4.

was raised to machinery in itself. In 1802 the cloth finishers of Wiltshire rose against the gig-mills.[1] There was considerable intercourse with the wool workers of Yorkshire, and the riots were the more formidable in that they were led by discharged soldiers whom the Peace of Amiens had thrown back into civilian life to find their places gone. In about a month £8,000 worth of damage was done. There was an Act of the reign of Edward VI which made gig-mills illegal, and the men claimed that they were only enforcing the law. In Yorkshire they were successful in keeping out the machines, but in Wiltshire Thomas Elleker was convicted of arson and executed, and the men entered on a long parliamentary agitation, which definitely failed in 1809.

UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

THE

WORKING-MAN'S COMPANION.

THE

RESULTS OF MACHINERY,

NAMELY,

CHEAP PRODUCTION

AND

INCREASED EMPLOYMENT, EXHIBITED:

BEING

AN ADDRESS TO THE WORKING-MEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

CHARLES KNIGHT, PALL-MALL EAST.

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1831.

The years 1812–13 are memorable for the Luddite outrages. These originated among the framework knitters of Nottingham, and were not actually directed against machinery itself. Some of the baser employers had devised a scheme for adapting old machines to make a false kind of stocking called 'cut ups'. These were flat pieces of knitting, out of which gloves, socks, and stockings were cut and sewn up. Having no proper selvage

[1] See p. 355.

they gave way easily and were useless. But they were not easily distinguished at sight, and so the market became overstocked with worthless goods which dragged down the price of well-made ones. There was much agitation against them, and the better masters agreed not to reduce wages if the men could manage to put down 'cut work'. The men's organization not being strong enough to coerce the masters, the men took to breaking all frames that made spurious articles or belonging to masters who did not pay the current wage. They called themselves Luddites, and their proclamations were signed 'Ned Ludd'. The original Ned Ludd was a boy apprentice who refused to work, and being whipped by the order of the magistrate, broke up his frame with a hammer. Who was the actual Ned Ludd or King Ludd who led the rioters has never transpired. Gravener Henson, their Union leader, was opposed to violence. Frame-breaking had happened before in the hosiery trade, but this time it was organized and well planned. It was easy to do, since the frames were hired out by the masters and were scattered in cottages. About 1,000 frames altogether were destroyed. For

'The Leader of the Luddites' disguised as a woman. Cartoon of 1812.

a time the men were successful, and wages are said to have been raised 2*s.* a dozen pair. Nine men were tried for their share in the riots, and seven of them transported for seven or fourteen years. But for the humanity of the judge, Mr. Justice Bayley, they would have been tried on the capital charge of burglary. One life was lost in the riots.

The Lancashire and Cheshire riots followed those at Nottingham a few months later, and were directed against the new power-looms. But the Luddite outrages were mixed up with food riots, which were for the most part spontaneous outbursts, and most of the machinery burning seems to have been started by spies, who did not hesitate to create the crimes they afterwards denounced. One or two mills were burnt, wild rumours of a nation-wide conspiracy flew around, and the military killed some rioters.

The vengeance of the law fell on thirty-two men and women, eight of whom were hanged—one a boy of sixteen, described as childish for his age—seventeen transported, and seven imprisoned for six months. Besides these, thirty-eight men were tried on a charge of administering an oath to a certain Samuel Fleming, who was a spy and whose evidence was entirely unsupported. These men were helped by the party of reform, were defended by Brougham, and after ten weeks in prison were triumphantly acquitted.

The Yorkshire Luddites have achieved greater notoriety, partly due to Charlotte Brontë's having made their doings the background of her novel *Shirley*. The agitation here was a sequel to the gig-mill dispute of 1802. Since the shearmen refused to shear cloth whose nap had been raised in mills, it was advantageous to the masters to have shearing machinery. This could do the work of four highly skilled men. Now the year 1812 was a bad time to introduce changes. There had been a poor harvest and the Orders in Council[1] were just producing their greatest effect of unemployment. The men began by destroying the frames in small outlying mills, and finding little resistance, grew bolder. It was impossible to guard all the scattered mills with

[1] See p. 394.

EXECUTION OF LUDDITES, &c.

Leicester, April 17.—The most melancholy spectacle ever witnessed at Leicester took place this day, in the execution of the seven men under sentence of death, viz. the six Luddites, for destroying lace machines, and firing with intent to kill, in the factory of Messrs. Heathcote and Boden, at Loughborough, last June; the other for arson, or setting stacks on fire, at Newbold, in the said county — The names of the Luddites were—Joshua Mitchell, John Crowder, John Amos, William Towle, William Withers and Thomas Savidge; the name of the other Thomas Beavington. As early as six o'clock in the morning they were removed, under military escort, from the jail to the new Bridewell, to be executed on the new drop. On their way, the Luddites very cheerfully sung hymns all the time they passed. Beavington seemed very dejected.—Many thousands of spectators kept assembling until noon, to witness this truly tragic scene, and conducted themselves in the most peaceable manner. About twelve o'clock the unhappy men appeared on the platform, attended by the Rev. Mr. Hayton, chaplain to the jail; the Rev. Mr. Vaughan, the Sheriff, and other officers. Since their condemnation the Luddites had conducted themselves in the most becoming manner, desiring forgiveness of God, and forgiving Blackburn and Burton, (by far the worse characters) who were admitted evidence against them. Beavington, an ignorant man, was insensible of his situation to the last. Savidge thanked the Reverend Ministers for their kindness and attention on their behalf; he said he had intended to say more, but the time was too far gone, hoped the people would take warning by their fate, fear no man, but fear God; and declared their innocence of shooting.—Amos addressed the people:—"Friends and fellow countrymen! You see here six men going to suffer innocently; the man who committed the crime will soon be at large. Take warning by our fate—Farewell." Mitchell said a few words, much similar; and without any apparent agitation they spoke to several friends in the crowd; and threw oranges, &c. to some of them, and desired to be remembered to their Nottingham acquaintances.—When all things were ready for the fatal moment, Amos, with a firm and undaunted voice, said they would now sing a hymn, and desired the people to join them, which was readily complied with by numbers. The hymn he chose, and to which he pitched the tune, was from Dr. Watts.

All the Luddites joined very earnestly in singing the hymn; immediately after which the platform fell, and launched them into eternity.

Beavington declared his innocence to the last, and *called God to witness* he did not set the stacks on fire.

We lament to say, that the most of these misguided men, in the bloom of life, have left *widows*, and more than *thirty children*, to add to the miseries of the present truly calamitous times !!

From *The Liverpool Mercury*, Apil 25, 1817

2261.2

soldiers, and it was only after months of activity that the men were checked, in an attack on William Cartwright's mill at Ranfolds, of which a somewhat modified account is given in *Shirley*. Cartwright was accused of ill-treating two wounded rioters in order to extort information from them. Whether this is true or not the two died loyal to their fellows, and the minds of the workers turned to vengeance. An unsuccessful attack was made on Cartwright, and ten days later another mill-owner was shot by four men. The temper of the men is shown by the fact that although the murderers were known by at least five others and must have been guessed by many more, the offer of a reward of £2,000 was of no avail. The Government was frightened and the West Riding was flooded with soldiers and spies, magistrates were endowed with special powers, and finally a special commission was set up. The account of the trials that followed is interesting, but cannot be attempted here; many of the accused were convicted on the doubtful evidence of men trying to save their own lives by betraying their associates. Seventeen were executed, three for the murder of Horsfall; many were transported to the colonies. One is glad to learn that the chief traitor was cheated out of the reward of £2,000 promised him.

As to the wide-famed 'Luddite oath', which so scared the Government, a detailed study of all the evidence and of Home Office papers has led Mr. and Mrs. Hammond to the conviction that there is no evidence to show that the oath was widespread, or that it was ever administered except in districts where spies were busy at work.[1]

In 1826 there was very general distress and the cotton weavers were starving. The infinite patience of these oppressed workers was marvellous, if to us not so commendable as to the Vicar of Blackburn, who in April 1826 praised them that 'none of them have transgressed the bounds of propriety, or shown a spirit of insubordination to the laws of their country'. But the worthy vicar somewhat too rashly assumed that their trust in 'Provi-

[1] Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 339.

dence and God's servants' could not be tried too far, for before the month was out they had destroyed over 1,000 power-looms round Blackburn and Bury. The rioting did not last long; as a result ten wretches were transported, thirty-three others imprisoned.

Summary. 1. A tendency to capitalist organization of industry had become more and more evident throughout the eighteenth century. There were men and money waiting, ready to use the increased facilities for production that machinery could give. Mechanical invention found earliest scope in the cotton and iron industries, because the one was nearly new and the other moribund. In wool and other textiles, old customs and traditions postponed for a generation the complete transfer to production by power and to thorough capitalist organization.

2. The immediate effect of this revolution in industry was an enormous increase of production, which increased the total wealth of the nation at an unprecedented rate and that of individuals to sums undreamt of earlier; at the same time there was a progressive and rapid degradation of the standard of life of the workers, which reached its limit in the years immediately following the peace of 1815.

3. During the whole period humane men were trying to secure the interference of Parliament to prevent the worst abuses of the new system, and after several futile attempts, Parliament produced in 1833 the first Factory Act that had in it a germ of success.

4. Since appeals to the law to protect them failed, the workers turned to combination as their sole defence against the greed of their masters, and the Trade Union movement was born.

Its early history is one of fairly constant and heroic failure. Up to 1832 Government, Parliament, and all the middle and upper classes combined to prevent the manual worker taking measures to oppose the exploitation of his individual labour. For most of the period Trade Unions were illegal societies, carried on secretly or at the risk of heavy punishment to the leaders. During this time the workers learnt by bitter experience

that collective power was not a thing to be won in short bursts of enthusiasm, and that they must learn to walk before they could run. The dreams of Owen and his followers faded, the attempts to organize on a big scale failed, and by 1830 the workers were ready to start the slow, steady process of organic growth from small things to large, out of which the movement of the next fifty years was to evolve slowly and become the second greatest power of the modern world.

5. By the end of the period the four leading industries of England were cotton, wool, iron, and coal, and the two last had become indispensable to the two first. Wool had not quite passed out of the domestic stage, since most wool-weaving was still done with the hand-loom, but the three others were, with very small exceptions, organized for capitalist production.

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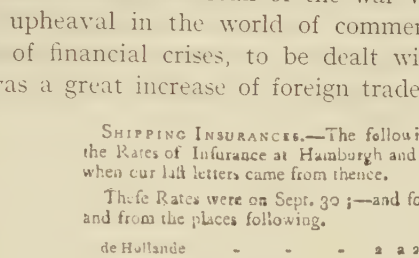
3. Commerce. Transit. Finance

The Expansion of Trade. It is obvious that the first effect of the industrial revolution must be a great increase in our foreign trade. Machinery enabled us to make more goods than were actually needed at home, and our exports to foreign markets increased rapidly. But, since if we sell we must also buy, our imports, especially of raw material for manufacture, rose too. The graph on p. 394 gives the official figures for the imports and exports from 1760 to 1830, based on the customs returns; they are not at all accurate, but the relative rise and fall is sufficiently so to illustrate the general trend. The rise after 1785 is marked, and it greatly surprised the men of the time that the greatest rise of all was in the American trade, just when they thought the loss of the Colonies would cause it to vanish for ever. In 1786 a commercial treaty had been arranged with France, which undid the Methuen Treaty,[1] admitting French wines on the same terms as those of Portugal, and lowering greatly the duties on other imports from France. The old policy of the Navigation Laws still persisted and considerably

See p. 292.

hampered the trade between the United States and the West Indies.

The effect of the outbreak of the war with France in 1793 was an upheaval in the world of commerce, but in spite of a series of financial crises, to be dealt with later, the actual result was a great increase of foreign trade. Napoleon did his



SHIPPING INSURANCES.—The following were the Rates of Insurance at Hamburgh and Altona, when our last letters came from thence.

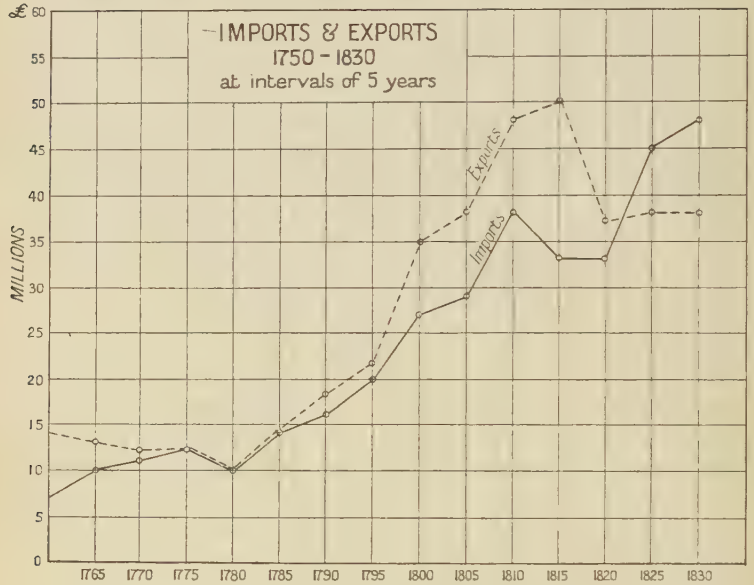
These Rates were on Sept. 30;—and formed to and from the places following.

de Hollande	2 a 2½ p. C.
Dunkerque, Havre, Rouen	2½ - 3
Bourdeaux, Rochelle, Nantes	4½ - 5½
Londres, Hull, Newcastle	2½ - 3½
Bristol, Liverpool	5 - 6
Bayonne, Bilboa	5 - 6
Lisbonne, Porto	6 - 7
Cadiz, Malaga, Alicante	7 - 8
Barcelone, Cette, Marseille	7 - 8
Genes, Livourne, Messine	6 - 8
Venise, Trieste, Gallipoli	7 - 9
Groenland	- -
Amerique Septentr.	6 - 7
Archangel	6 - 7
Petersbourg, Riga, Revel	5 - 6
Stockholm	5 - 6
Koningsberg, Dantzic, Pomeran	4 - 5
Jutland, Breme	2 - 2
Norwege, Gothembourg	3 - 4
Copenhague	3 -

'In spite of prohibitive insurance rates, trade increased.'
Newspaper cutting of 1795.

best to strangle our commerce and failed; in retaliation we tried to kill the trade of the rest of Europe, and to a large extent succeeded. Quite early in the war France, fighting for her life against the allied monarchies of Europe, began to seize neutral ships; England laid an embargo on French ships and gradually closed the ports of her allies to France. In spite of prohibitive insurance rates, trade increased. In the first place a series of bad harvests from 1792 forced us to import corn, and the enormous output of our textiles demanded markets at any cost.

Convinced that the backbone of European resistance to him was English gold, made by English trade, Napoleon set out to kill the source of that wealth. Early in 1806 England had tried to strike at neutral trading with France by declaring a blockade from Brest to the Elbe, though in actual fact it was only carried



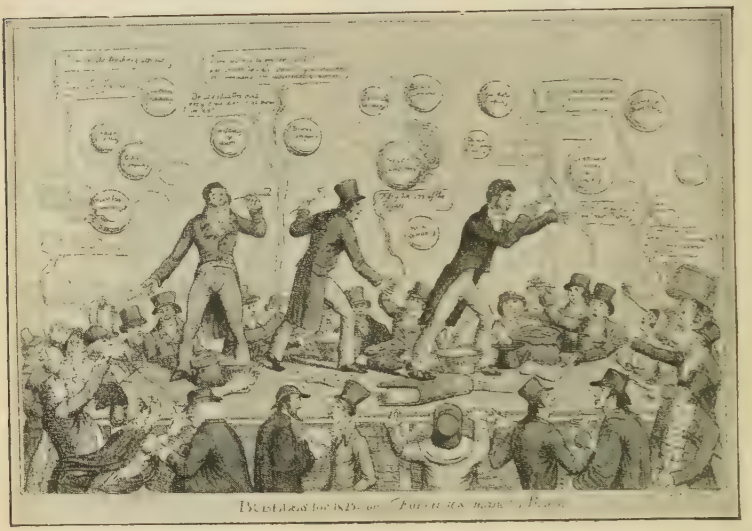
out at the mouth of the Seine and in the narrow seas. This gave Napoleon a chance of posing as the champion of neutrals, and in the Berlin Decrees (1806) he denounced the blockade as a breach of international law, and as a reprisal declared the British Isles to be in a state of blockade, and ordered that no English ship was to enter the harbour of any French ally. In 1807 the Orders in Council retaliated by refusing to allow *any* ship to go where English ships could not, and seized as lawful prize the vessels of all French allies. In spite of our command of the sea, by 1809 Napoleon had won considerable success; Denmark, Sweden, and Austria had been forced into the 'con-

The Number of Ships and their Tonnage that have cleared outwards and entered inwards at the Port of Liverpool, from the Year 1751 to the Year 1793.

	Inwards.				Outwards.			
	British.		Foreign.		British.		Foreign.	
Year.	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.
1751	523	29,178	20	2535	588	31,185	20	2508
1752	529	29,137	46	5430	561	31,777	48	5884
1753	584	34,221	28	3515	601	34,689	22	3085
1754	577	32,255	44	5710	588	33,435	42	5843
1755	507	33,159	29	3425	519	30,660	27	3315
1756	522	29,793	48	5195	607	35,426	42	4542
1757	554	32,386	68	7300	609	37,881	57	7268
1758	602	36,263	63	7396	641	38,502	56	6277
1759	519	33,006	112	17,789	551	35,079	117	14,498
1760	556	36,884	76	10,535	592	37,157	81	11,663
1761	529	32,899	80	11,043	654	40,268	60	8223
1762	623	45,540	94	12,344	614	39,304	102	13,844
1763	574	39,714	78	11,584	700	44,863	92	13,596
1764	695	46,387	71	10,112	772	50,709	58	8132
1765	738	53,030	65	8134	795	53,807	70	9811
1766	646	51,623	54	7825	708	51,012	69	9370
1767	663	51,690	70	8011	784	57,376	66	9482
1768	727	54,949	57	7225	826	60,379	59	7950
1769	759	58,348	77	10,784	907	62,499	78	11,329
1770	743	46,062	63	7965	942	66,516	79	10,381
1771	764	59,734	55	6924	959	73,432	65	10,366
1772	857	68,812	68	8401	1022	81,689	73	11,284
1773	970	70,392	57	7111	1022	76,588	64	9366
1774	989	79,315	61	8032	973	76,892	64	8744
1775	1016	86,382	56	7294	983	76,686	57	7494
1776	901	74,140	81	12,991	937	68,488	75	11,616
1777	893	70,792	101	11,627	979	71,295	96	11,852
1778	838	76,277	100	13,342	857	63,420	95	11,782
1779	742	57,103	136	17,623	908	64,836	149	19,379
1780	739	58,769	133	17,087	880	61,573	151	19,202
1781	801	58,914	169	22,569	1021	65,477	182	25,899
1782	847	66,290	169	23,107	968	64,481	213	30,295
1783	1165	96,089	206	28,376	1355	105,074	222	32,294
1784	1217	122,263	162	26,091	1333	113,481	160	26,958
1785	1427	127,388	129	21,576	1446	122,195	129	21,990
1786	1381	140,224	150	27,611	1337	128,766	140	28,194
1787	1348	153,625	161	26,903	1474	159,834	180	31,715
1788	1570	140,812	152	25,600	1673	186,355	156	26,973
1789	1603	171,672	89	15,202	1486	170,369	87	14,456
1790	1864	205,440	200	35,677	1779	201,641	196	36,143
1791	1814	220,318	254	46,878	1904	225,641	263	46,839
1792	1832	225,242	215	41,166	1626	231,277	212	41,213
1793	1704	188,286	215	41,177	1739	169,770	240	47,719

From Aikin's *Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles round Manchester*, 1795.

tinental system', and our treatment of neutrals was rapidly alienating the United States. It is possible that he would have succeeded, had he not, by his interference in Spain, caused the revolt of the South American colonies and so thrown open to us their markets. The enormous amount of our textile production and its cheapness, sweated out of the hand-weavers, enabled us to stand the cost of a huge smuggling trade, so that



FORTUNES MADE BY STEAM, 1825. From a satirical print.

the Berlin Decrees were largely evaded. High farming at home made us nearly self-sufficing in food, and so we were able to hold out, and as at the same time with our fleet we cut off all raw material from Europe, it was Napoleon's alliances that broke down first. That the war brought wealth to some is shown by the fact that an income-tax of 2*s.* in the pound realized in 1798 the sum of £6,200,000, and in 1813 £14,485,000, the index figure of living for the two years being approximately the same.

After peace came a drop in trade, which continued till 1820, and then a slow increase, varied by the wild speculation of 1825

and its resultant crash. The graph of imports and exports is interesting in one or two other points. After 1795 the imports drop away from the exports ; now actually of course if you sell exports you get back the same value of imports ; the difference here is represented by the gold that poured into the country, and—we may add—poured out again in the huge subsidies by which Pitt maintained in being the continental opposition to Napoleon. But after 1825 the imports rise above the exports, and never again in our history have they changed their relative position. Were we then pouring gold out of the country ? Not necessarily ; in this case the difference is probably represented by the services rendered by our ships in carrying goods, which have been since 1800 an important item of ' concealed exports ', as they are sometimes called. Another factor which enables us to buy apparently more than we sell lies in the interest paid on English capital invested abroad, which also during our period increased rapidly with improving transit.

Decay of the Mercantile System. As the eighteenth century drew to a close it became more and more evident that the end of the old system of regulated trade was near. We have noted the new treaty with France in 1786, but the political needs of war prevented any further relaxations, though the manufacturing community was becoming very restive at the hands that held them ; and five years after the peace, in 1820, the MERCHANTS OF LONDON definitely petitioned the Government to remove all duties not imposed purely for revenue. Edinburgh followed, and as a result a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire and report.

In 1823 Huskisson took office as President of the Board of Trade, and by degrees he greatly modified the tariff. He removed prohibitions and reduced duties till the highest was 30 per cent., making those on raw materials specially light. He also increased the warehousing system, so that many more articles could be kept in bond, duty free, till needed or re-exported. At the same time the stringent rules as to trade with the Colonies were greatly relaxed, their trade for the most part being thrown open to the

world. Already our ports had been opened to ships of all nations on the same terms as they were willing to allow ours. From now till the end of our period men like Peel and Huskisson became more and more influential, but the real battle of Free Trade and Protection was delayed till the forties.

Transit. Roads. After 1760 there was a great increase in the number and extent of turnpike roads and the travelling coach became common. Still there were many roads left in a deplorable condition, and the farmers often opposed improvement, because they feared the competition of wider markets. Even as late as 1815 London streets were often dangerous to traverse. Telford and McAdam revolutionized road-making in the early part of the nineteenth century, and the average speed of coaches rose from four or five to seven or eight miles an hour; a speed of even twelve miles per hour was attained between Liverpool and Manchester, and was the subject of complaint in the House of Commons. The palmy period of coaching was from 1820 to 1836. At the later date there were 3,000 coaches running, with 150,000 horses and 30,000 coachmen, guards, ostlers, &c. From one London tavern 80 coaches started daily to the north and from another 53 to the west. The cost in horses was terrible, and the ten miles an hour speed used up a horse in three or four years. At this time there were 1,116 turnpike trusts controlling 22,000 miles of road. The system was inefficient and wasteful, and many of the trusts were insolvent. The decline of coaching made matters worse. They raised their tolls and increased the frequency of their gates, thereby exasperating the public, while the poorer trusts took the tolls and left the roads unmended. In 1841 they were allowed, if necessary, to draw on the highway rate of the parishes, a concession which was a State subsidy to inefficiency. In 1864 a special committee recommended the winding up of all turnpike trusts, and this was done by degrees. The care of the roads was thrown back on the parishes, and no further remedy provided for twenty-five years.

Waterways. English roads being so bad one would expect a large use to have been made of transit by water, and indeed

REDUCED FARES
From the
CROWN INN, REDCROSS-STREET.

The Public are respectfully informed, that the

COMMODORE,

A NEW AND ELEGANT POST COACH,

HAS commenced Running from this Office, every Morning, quarter before Seven o'clock, through Preston and Garstang, to the Royal Oak and King's Arms Inns, Lancaster.

Fares to Lancaster, Inside 7s. Outside 5s.
Fares to Kendal, ditto 10s. ditto 7s.

CARLISLE Post Coach, every Morning at Eight o'clock, through Preston, Lancaster, Kendal, Shap and Penrith, to the Bush Inn and Coffee House, Carlisle, in Eighteen Hours.

WHITEHAVEN Coach, through Kendal, Ambleside, Keswick, Cockermouth, Marypo't, &c. to the King's Arms Inn, Whitehaven, every Morning at Eight o'clock, Sunday excepted.

ULVERSTONE, Cartmel, Dalton and Milnthorpe Coach, every Morning at a quarter before Seven and Eight o'clock.

EDINBURGH Light Post Coach, through Langholm, Howick, Selkirk and Middleton, to the Black Bull, Edinbro', every Morning.

GLASGOW Post Coach, through Ecclefechan, Lockerby, Moffat, Elvanfoot, Douglas, Hamilton, to the Trongate Inn, Glasgow, every Morning at Eight.

YORK and Harrowgate, the Royal Pilot, Light Post Coach, (only four inside) every Morning at Five o'clock, through Preston, Blackburn, Whalley, Clitheroe, Gisburn, Skipton, Otley, Weatherby, arrives at the Black Swan and York Tavern York, at half-past Nine o'clock, returns from thence by the same route every Morning, at Six o'clock

PORT-PATRICK and Dumfries Coach, by Castle Douglas, Newton-Douglas, Glenbue, Stranraer, to Port-Patrick, from whence a safe and immediate passage to Donaghadee, in Ireland, may be obtained, being only sixteen miles across the water.

HULL, Gainsborough, Scarborough, Whitby, Durham Sunderland, Shields, Newcastle-upon Tyne and Morpeth Coaches, every Morning at Five o'clock, also at Eight o'clock.

ROYAL MAIL to Carlisle, every Afternoon, at a quarter past Five o'clock, to the Bush Inn, Coffee-house, Carlisle,

Performed by
F. BRETHERTON, & Co.

Who are not accountable for any Box, Trunk, Parcel or Packages of any description, unless entered and insurance paid for accordingly.

Crown Inn, Redcross-street, Liverpool.

NEW POST COACH,

(Only Four Inside,)

TO LONDON,

CALLED PRINCE SAXE COBOURG,

LEAVES the above Inn every Morning at Seven o'clock, and arrives at the SWAN-WITH-TWO-NECKS, Lad-lane, LONDON, the following day, at Three o'clock precisely.

Performed by SAMUEL HENSHAW & Co. Liverpool;

Who are happy to announce, they have succeeded in establishing this Coach on the most respectable system. It performs its Journey in less time than others, not by excessive driving, but by its taking the shortest rout, and strict attention paid that no time is unnecessarily lost. Steady Coachmen and Guards are selected; and the Public are respectfully informed, that every exertion has been used to complete it a respectable, safe, pleasant, and expeditious conveyance, well guarded and lighted, and only four Coachmen.

TIME BILL,
FROM LIVERPOOL TO LONDON,
Off at Seven o'Clock.

Miles.	Time allowed. H.	M.	Towns.	Time to arrive H.	M.
18	2	30	At Warrington	9	30
12	1	55	Knutsford	11	5
14	2	5	Congleton	1	10
14	1	30	Bursiem	2	40
		30	Dinner, and off	3	10
11	1	30	At Stone	4	40
22	3	20	Lichfield	8	0
		30	Supper, and off	8	30
15	2	10	At Coleshill	10	40
12	1	50	Coventry	12	30
11	1	30	Dunchurch	2	0
8	1	10	Daventry	3	10
12	1	50	Towcester	5	0
8	1	10	Stratford	6	10
		30	Breakfast, and off	6	40
27½	4	26	At Redburn	11	5
11½	1	35	Mims	12	40
17	2	20	London	3	0
	32	0			

To arrive in London at three o'clock precisely.

NOTE—If the above Time be not strictly kept, (accidents excepted) the Passengers are particularly requested not to give the Coachman or Guard their usual perquisite.

☞ FROM THE ABOVE INN, COACHES PROCEED TO EVERY PART OF THE KINGDOM.

Advertisements from *The Liverpool Mercury* of Aug. 23, 1816, and May 23, 1817

LOCKS AND TOLLS on the Thames. From Bowles's *Draught of the River Thames*.

such had been the case. Since pack-horses were the only possible means of carriage in many districts and the roads in winter almost impassable everywhere, heavy goods were usually forwarded by river or sea. For example, all through the Middle Ages and up to the eighteenth century, Bawtry on the Idle was an important port. In the map no place could look more inland, lying in the hollow of south Yorkshire between Doncaster and Retford. Yet it was, all through these centuries, the main port of export for Sheffield goods, which reached it by a road journey of twenty miles and thence passed in barges down the Idle into the Trent via Stockwith to Hull and thence by sea to the East Coast, London, and the Continent. England, in fact, was studded with these river ports, such as Willington near Burton-on-Trent and Winsford on the Weaver, from which the pottery of Staffordshire found its way east and west. But river transit has peculiar difficulties, especially on the small rivers of England, which are apt to flood, to dry up, or to make shoals or rapids, with the delightful uncertainty of the English climate. Attempts at improvements of the river beds themselves had proved costly and not always successful, and the step

from artificial short cuts in the rivers to entire artificial rivers was not long delayed. The first of the canals has already been referred to,[1] and after 1750 an extensive system was developed. It was the enterprise of the Duke of Bridgewater and the genius of James Brindley, a self-educated engineer, that started the movement. In 1760 carriage between Manchester and Liverpool by

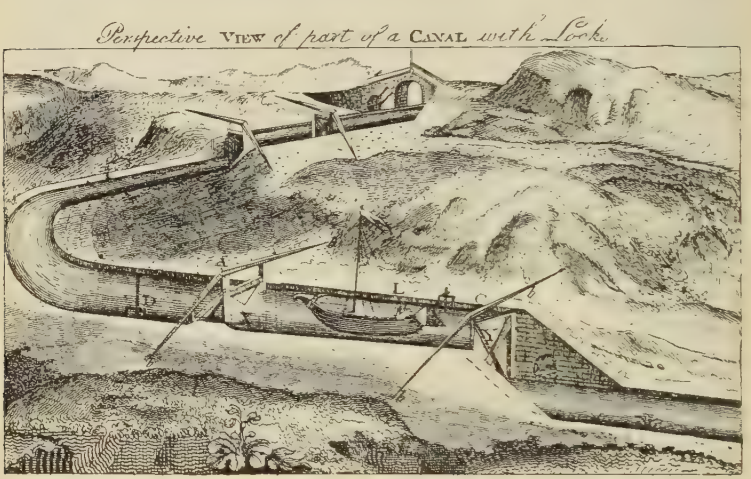
THE BRIDGEWATER CANAL crossing the Irwell.
From Aikin's *Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles round Manchester*, 1795.

road cost £2 a ton, by water along the Mersey and Irwell it cost 12s., but was very uncertain and tedious. When the Duke of Bridgewater proposed a canal he was fought by the vested interest of the river navigation monopoly, just as later the canals fought the railways. The scheme proved very costly, and the duke's resources were stretched to the utmost, though he reduced his personal expenditure to £400 a year and Brindley's salary to £1 a week, and not always that. This canal was completed in

[1] See p. 287.

PUBLIC LI

1773, and his two canals cost the duke £220,000. The new highway increased Manchester trade and made Liverpool; for previously the export route had been via Bridgnorth and the Severn. In 1766 Brindley started on the Grand Trunk Canal to link the Mersey, Severn, and Trent. The engineering feat was considerable, involving a rise of 395 feet with two flights of 35 and 40 locks respectively, five tunnels, one being $1\frac{2}{3}$ miles long, and five aqueducts over the Dove and Trent. It was



opened in 1777, and Hull was thus linked with Liverpool. Later the Trent was connected with the Severn via Wolverhampton and with the Thames via Lichfield and Oxford. The new communications made possible the pottery developments of Josiah Wedgwood. The cost of carriage by canal was about one quarter that by road.

In 1769 the forty-one years' work on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal was begun. This had to be carried over a rise of over 500 ft. and through a tunnel nearly a mile long. And so the work went on in spite of the usual opposition with the usual artificial arguments: the new system would diminish the breed

of horses, would injure the coastal trade, weaken the navy. The road carriers, the innkeepers, the farmers (who objected to wasting good grain land by covering it with water), all raised their cry. But in the end a whole system was made that linked up Liverpool, Hull, Bristol, and London, a system which the coming railways first bought up and then disastrously allowed to fall into disuse.

Ships and Docks. As remarkable as anything was the increase and development of our shipping. In 1760 we are still in the line of development from the days of Drake. Most trading vessels were about 300 tons burden; East Indiamen built specially for the trade ranged from 700 to 1,000 tons. About 1770 copper was first used to sheathe ships' bottoms, and thus frequent careenage could be avoided.

During the war the size and number of vessels increased both by building and by capture. In the American War of 1812 we found ourselves outclassed and began to build larger ships up to 3,000 tons. Compared to modern ships they were rather tubs, the length being generally about four times the beam. In 1802 the first steamboat appeared on the Clyde, the *Charlotte Dundas*; in 1807 there was one in America; in 1812 the *Comet* was running successful passenger services, and by 1821 steam-packets plied the Channel and the Irish Sea. All these were wooden boats and driven by paddles. In 1819 the *Savannah* crossed the Atlantic in 29½ days under sail and steam (but only 89 hours of the voyage were with steam), and a Government cutter chased her for a day off Ireland, thinking she was on fire! The first steam voyage to Calcutta was achieved in 1825. A few iron boats appeared after 1818, but the use of this metal was very slowly adopted.

Up to the end of the eighteenth century most ships discharged their cargoes either directly on to wharves by the river-side or into lighters and barges. In rivers, such as the Thames, the Mersey, and the Bristol Avon, where the rise and fall of the tide was considerable, the first of these plans was difficult, and the second became increasingly dangerous as the size of ships

increased. Besides this, the discharging of cargoes into lighters and the enormous number of labourers engaged in the process gave opportunity for endless thieving. Casks were secretly tapped or caused to leak, bags of sugar and spices opened or cut and part of their contents abstracted, and even the tackle and fitments of the vessels themselves carried off under cover of the dark. The pilfering became a systematized trade, fully comparable to the smuggling of the same era, and mates of vessels and watchmen were well paid to connive at it. It was said that as much as thirty guineas would be passed to a ship's officer to shut his eyes to a night's prowl in the ship's hold, while lighters and bumboats hovered round ready to dash off with the spoil. One merchant discovered that the lightermen loaded his oil barrels upside down and claimed the oil that thus flowed into their hold as perquisite; the booty of one load amounted to fourteen casks full.

Previous to 1750 there had been few wet docks in Great Britain; docks at Rotherhithe, on the Surrey side of the Thames, have existed since the middle of the seventeenth century, and Glasgow had a harbour and a graving dock by 1662. In 1715 the first dock at Liverpool was opened, and three more were added by the end of the century. Then began the development of London; in 1802 the West India Dock was opened, covering some twelve acres of water-space in two divisions, with ample quays and warehouses; in 1829 the South Dock was added. The London Docks were opened in 1805, to receive tobacco, rice, wine, and brandy, and St. Katharine's followed in 1828. Liverpool had ten docks by 1834, and most of the leading ports followed.

Posts and News. A general postal service developed very gradually. In 1683 there was a penny post in London, and later there was a service for a twelve-mile radius from the General Post Office, with charges according to distance. In 1785 John Palmer introduced a system of post by stage-coach, and by the end of the eighteenth century most large towns had a daily delivery, and small ones two or three times a week. The postage

Read and be Accommodated.

ETNA,

TRANMERE FERRY STEAM PACKET.

THIS Packet has commenced running from the New Slip, at the West Side of the Queen's Dock Graving Docks, where every convenience will be found for taking on board and discharging Carriages, Carts, Horses, and Cattle of every description, going to and from Cheshire, without the trouble that has hitherto been experienced in the Common Sail Boats, and which it is the intention of the Proprietors as much as possible to obviate. This Vessel is peculiarly adapted for Carriages, &c. to drive on board, without the trouble of UNHARNESSING, and will be found a most eligible and safe Conveyance for Gentlemen going to

CHESTER RACES,

As she crosses from Liverpool to Tranmere every half hour, remaining only ten minutes on each side.

TERMS OF PASSAGE:

	s.	*d.*
A Four-wheeled Carriage, with two Horses and Passengers	10	0
A Gig and Horse, with Passengers	4	0
If more than one Horse, extra for each	1	0
Should any of the above return the same day, Half Price will be charged.		
Horse and Rider	1	6
Cattle, per head	1	0
Sheep, per score	3	0
Pigs and Calves	0	3
Cart and Horse	4	0
Large Ditto and two Horses	5	6
Half Price for Carts returning the same day.		
Corn, Flour, Meal, Bran, &c. per	0	2
Passengers on Sundays	0	4
Ditto, Working Days	0	3
Market People, allowed to carry three Baskets or Hampers without any additional charge	0	3

Performed by BATMAN, FRENCH & Co.

Liverpool, 1st May, 1817.

From *The Liverpool Mercury*, May 2, 1817

2201.2

was collected on delivery. A letter to Edinburgh or Dublin from London cost 6*d*. To India and the Colonies the postal service was partly controlled by the Admiralty, and delivery seemed a matter of chance.

The earliest DAILY NEWSPAPER appeared in Dublin in 1700. The first English daily was the *Daily Courant* in 1702; after 1776 there were several in London, including the *Morning Post* (1772) and *The Times* (1788). The duty on each issue in 1797 was 3½*d*. per paper, and the price 6½*d*. or 7*d*. There was also

> IF any ſober Family of 3 or 4 and ſome tolera- Subſtance, will look after a large Houſe, about 20 Miles from *London*; he ſhall have an Apartment *gratis*, with a Dairy, pretty large Kitchen, Gardens and Orchards new planted. There will be a great many Herbs for diſtillation: There are 2 good Market-Towns a Mile on each Hand, to which Poſt comes 3 times a Week, and Carriers as often, and Coach to and fro every Day.

THE POST. Advertisement from Houghton's *Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, Aug. 28, 1696.

a tax on advertisements. In 1819 a bond was demanded of each paper as security for fines if inflicted for blasphemous or seditious libel.

Banking and Finance. There was a considerable development of banking during this period of great industrial expansion. The Bank of England maintained its monopoly in London, and was a comparatively firm rock in a shifting world. In 1763 the speculation that had prevailed throughout Europe during the Seven Years' War met the consequent crisis and there was a general crash, which included the great house of Neuville Bros. in Amsterdam. English merchants were affected, and only saved by advances from the Bank of nearly a million. The Bank's charter was renewed in 1764.

The effect of the industrial revolution on finance was the great demand for advances and for circulating media. Bank of

England notes did not circulate outside London ; moreover, the country areas had great need of credit facilities. Country banks rapidly increased in number, but since the law did not allow banks of issue (i. e. banks issuing their own notes) to have more than six partners, the provision of large stable banking companies was impossible and numbers of small ones arose ; all sorts of people, chemists, tailors, shopkeepers, bakers, taking to banking. In 1750 there were not twelve banks outside London, by 1793 there were 400, most of them with inadequate supplies of cash or credit to cover their issue of notes. Meanwhile the great Bank had been learning, at a price, how to meet the expanding needs of the merchants. There had been crises in 1770 and 1771 and in 1783. After this last the Bank adopted the rule of restricting note issues when gold began to be withdrawn and increasing them as the gold flowed back. In 1793 came a serious crisis of trade with the outbreak of war. The previous year had been bad, and in November the number of bankruptcies had been double the usual rate. In February 1793 the Bank refused to advance money on the securities offered by a house, which in consequence failed for a million, and the failure spread. The Bank, anxious for its own safety, contracted its issues, raised the rate at which it advanced money, and waited events. Pitt saved the situation by promising to advance five millions in Exchequer Bills to merchants on security of goods of all kinds. Actually only two millions were needed, and the Government made a small profit on the transaction. Only two of the borrowers went bankrupt. For two years things were quietly prosperous, but 1797 brought a serious crisis which had been foreshadowed in 1795. There were several causes :

1. In 1793 Parliament had passed an Act allowing the Government to draw on the Bank of England to an unlimited amount. Pitt, believing the war was going to be short, and afraid to risk heavy taxation, exercised his power and drew advances in four years of nearly 10 millions, besides floating costly loans.

2. Gold was pouring out of the country in subsidies to the

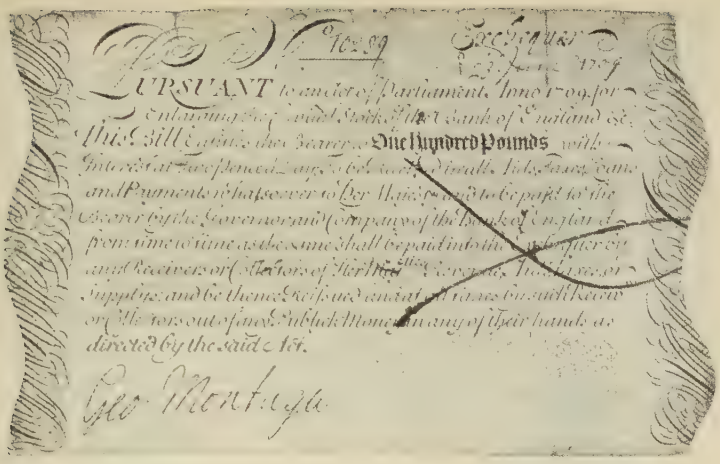
allies and in naval expenditure. In four years some 37 millions had gone in this way. The Bank made up the diminishing circulation by note issues, and so still further decreased its relative reserve of gold.

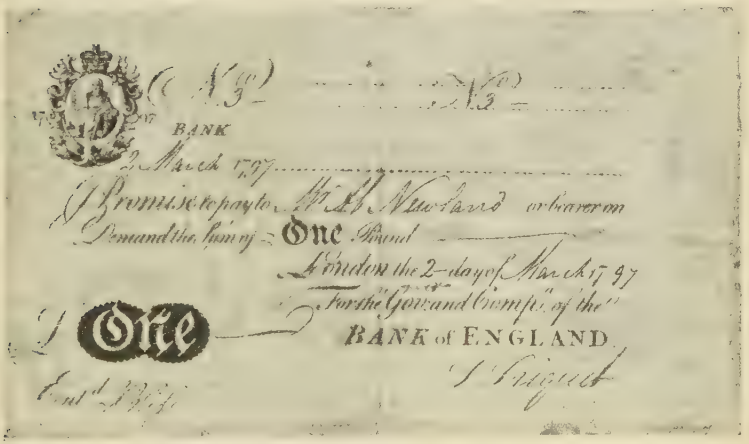
3. The country banks were in great disorder, and in crises drew on the Bank of England for gold.

4. There was a panic over a French invasion, and people withdrew and hoarded gold.

The Bank, though solvent, had not the gold to pay the claims on it, and in 1797 the Bank Restriction Act was passed, suspending cash payments of bank-notes and allowing unlimited issue of notes. Up to 1809 this power was used sparingly; Pitt ceased demanding advances and took to taxation, and things went more smoothly. After 1809 the effect of the mutual blockades made trade an increasingly risky investment. The opening of the South American markets, already noticed, added to the fury of speculation, and the Bank lent itself to the general trend, and increased its note issues, reaching in 1810 the sum of 21 millions, and the country banks supplied probably 30 millions more. Hence the price of gold rose and the exchange fell seriously. In 1810 the Report of the Bullion Committee advised resumption of cash payments, and expressed the opinion that the rise in the price of bullion and the fall of the exchange were due to over-issue of notes. They were not believed and Parliament rejected the report. The effect of the depreciation of the bank-note was serious; landlords lost as much as 17 per cent. of the real value of the rents, and creditors of long standing as much as 30 per cent. to 40 per cent. of the sums owed them. In 1814–15 with the coming of peace came the crash; many country banks failed, and the general note issue was thus lessened. In 1816 the Bank resumed partial cash payments, and in 1819 an Act ordered their complete restoration by 1823; actually they were resumed in 1821.

Meanwhile, a number of joint-stock banks had been founded which were not authorized to issue notes, but which worked by


PURSUANT to an Act of Parliament, Anno 1709, for
enlarging the Capital Stock of the Bank of England &c.
this Bill entitles the Bearer to One Hundred Pounds with
Interest at Five pence Farthing per Cent per Diem from the
and Payments to that Office to be paid to the
Bearer by the Governor and Company of the Bank of England
from time to time as the same shall be paid into the Cashier's Office
and Receivers of Taxes of Her Majesty's Revenue, Treasurers of
Supplies, and the Receivers and Cashiers of Taxes in such Places
as the Directors of the said Bank shall appoint for such Receivers
to pay out of the Publick Money in any of their hands as
directed by the said Act.


BANK
2 March 1797
I Promise to pay to Wm Weatherall or bearer on
Demand the Sum of One Pound
London the 2 day of March 1797
For the Gov.r and Comp.a of the
BANK of ENGLAND
One Pound

THE GROWTH OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND. Above, a £100 Exchequer Note of 1709. Below, one of the first £1 notes which were issued in the financial crisis of 1797

means of cheques.[1] As early as 1775 a clearing-house had been established in London. A clearing-house is a place where all the cheques drawn on the several banks and paid into other banks are set off against one another and the net balances due are determined. By 1814, of 940 private banks, 207 were of the kind that did not issue notes. In 1826 an Act authorized the formation of joint-stock banks of issue outside a 65 miles radius from London. But the cheque system was fully established, and was destined to supersede notes almost entirely. In 1832 an inquiry into our banking system was held, and it was followed by the Act of 1833. This Act made bank-notes legal tender, ordered the Bank to publish its accounts, repaid part of the Government debt to the Bank, but reduced its yearly payment to the Bank for managing the public debt. It also declared joint-stock banks issuing cheques to be legal, a point about which there had been some doubt. Immediately the London and Westminster Bank was founded in London. The charter of the Bank of England was renewed till 1855.

Coinage. There was a great scarcity of silver coins to meet all this swift expansion of trade ; they were also much depreciated. The war in Spain had drawn £100,000,000 in bullion or coin out of the country. In 1816, after the war, gold was adopted as the legal standard, though with the exception of Portugal we remained the only gold country till 1871. Silver ceased to be legal tender for sums over 40*s*. In 1817 new coinage was issued, and the 20*s*. sovereign replaced the guinea of 21*s*.

Joint-Stock Companies. We have seen the beginning of joint-stock enterprises ; the South Sea Bubble of 1720 had considerably shaken public opinion, and an Act of Parliament had been passed ordering all joint-stock companies to be incorporated either by charter or by Act of Parliament. Adam Smith's influence was against them, for he held that since the system

[1] A note is a promise of a *bank* to pay, which must be honoured or the bank is bankrupt ; a cheque is a promise of an *individual* to pay, and is only honoured by the bank if it holds enough of the individual's money to cover it.

threw the direction of other people's money into the hands of a small group its administration must inevitably be wasteful or negligent. In fact, the whole tendency of the time was in favour of the single enterprising capitalist, who gave his money and his brains and staked all his resources on the success of the venture. He might possibly induce others to lend him money, as Arkwright did, but the investment of money in transferable shares in a concern over which one had no further control did not attract an age drunk with the glories of competitive individualism. Indeed, until some form of limitation of liability was devised, such investment could not be attractive, for the possession of a few pound shares in a badly bankrupt company might involve one's whole fortune, since all the partners were liable to the whole extent of their property for the debts of the insolvent business. However, in 1825, it was made possible to form a joint-stock company without getting a charter from Parliament.

Summary. 1. There was as great extension of our foreign trade as of our manufactures, and not even war nor the strangling grip of out-of-date regulation succeeded in stifling it. In every direction trade increased; new markets appeared and old ones grew. Belief in the old system of subordinating trade to national policy was rapidly dying, and by the end of the period the battle between Free Trade and Protection is already joined, and the preliminary skirmishes are foreshadowing the final victory of *laisser-faire*.

2. Communications of all kinds were greatly improved both in ease and speed. Canals were made throughout the country, roads restored to something of the state in which Rome had left them fourteen hundred years before, ships grew in speed and tonnage, and the beginning of steam-power appeared on the ocean. Posts became general, and newspapers a necessity, at least for the rich. England was ceasing to be an aggregation of more or less isolated villages.

3. Banking grew also to meet the new demands, and a commerce based on credit and paper currency started its amazing

career. All questions of money and credit became increasingly important, for England was leading the way to the establishment of a world-market and international finance.

NEW LONDON BRIDGE, with the Lord Mayor's Procession passing under the unfinished arches, Nov. 9, 1827.

4. Legislation and Government Action. Economic Theory. Taxation

Chief Legislation of the Period (excluding Factory Acts which were dealt with in chapter 2).

1. General Enclosure Acts. Private Enclosure Acts had gone merrily through Parliaments entirely indifferent to the fate of the poor until, in 1774, the same casual method, applied to a case in which a rich man was opposed to the scheme, brought a storm about the head of the Government. Whereupon a series

of Standing Orders were made to regulate procedure, some of which have already been mentioned.[1] On the whole they protected the large holder against the avarice of his fellow, but did nothing for the poorer.

General Enclosure Bills were recommended by two Parliamentary Committees, and were introduced in 1795, 1796, 1797, and 1800. In 1801 the first General Enclosure Act was passed. The object of these Bills was to standardize procedure and so lessen the cost of enclosure, and to allow a certain majority of holders to arrange enclosure without recourse to Parliament. The Board of Agriculture which drafted them, of which Arthur Young was secretary, inserted clauses making some provision for the poorer members of the village community. These clauses invariably disappeared as the Bills progressed through Parliament. The opposition to these Bills was so determined that in 1801 the Board confined itself to one that merely cheapened procedure, and this became law. An attempt in 1813 to avoid single Acts of Enclosure again failed, and it was not till 1836 that a real General Enclosure Act was passed.

2. The story of the Corn Laws, the agitation against which becomes strong in the latter part of our period, must now be told. The Corn Law of 1689 remained in force till 1765. During that period it had apparently worked satisfactorily; prices had been low, but were prevented from sinking so low as to put land out of cultivation. After 1765 the principle of corn legislation remained the same, but the effect of war and of bad seasons caused frequent change in details. In 1773 all restrictions on internal trade in corn were abolished, and the prices at which import and export were allowed were frequently altered, in each case with the object of steadying prices and securing in war-time enough food for the population. But there were forces at work that no scheme of tariffs could control, and bad seasons and the impossibility of importing corn from countries devastated by war, and over seas infested by hostile navies, gradually ran prices up to famine limit. At the same time the high prices

[1] See p. 312.

had the effect of bringing much more land under cultivation, even uplands and wastes, which in normal times were not worth thinking of for corn-growing. It is usually considered that up to 1815, though the laws regulating export and import probably tended to steady prices (except when conditions became too abnormal), they kept a fair balance between producer and consumer.

HUNTING A LOAF.

GOOD people I pray give ear unto what I say,
And pray do not call it sedition, (pate,
For these great men of late they have crack'd my
I'm wounded in a woeful condition.
Fal lal de ral, &c.

For Derby it's true, and Nottingham too,
Poor men to the jail they've been taking,
They say that Ned Lud as I understood,
A thousand wide frames has been breaking.
Fal lal, &c.

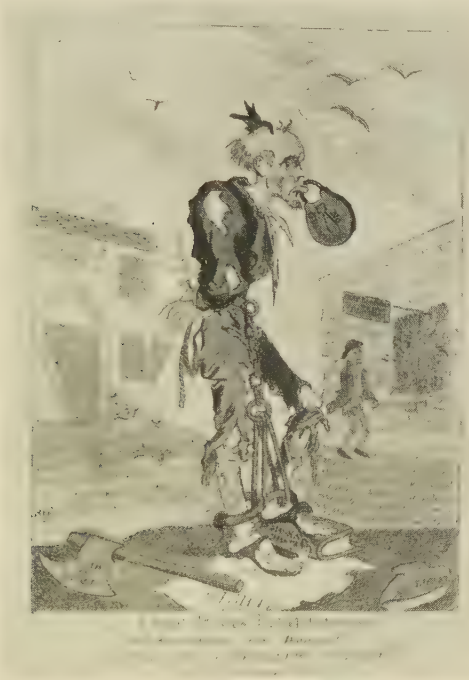
Now is it not bad there's no work to be had,
The poor to be starv'd in their station;
And if they do steal they're strait sent to the jail,
And they're hang'd by the laws of the nation.
Fal lal, &c.

Since this time last year I've been very queer,
And I've had a sad national cross;
I've been up and down, from town unto town,
With a shilling to buy a big loaf.
Fal lal, &c.

The first that I met was Sir Francis Burdett,
He told me he'd been in the Tower;
I told him my mind a big loaf was to find,
He said you must ask them in power.
Fal lal, &c.

After 1815 the growth of population had caught up the food-production of the country, and there was no margin to export, though freedom of export was allowed. On the other hand, the sudden cessation of war restored the possibility of import from the Continent, and prices dropped by over 100 per cent. Ruin faced the farmers and the landlords. In 1801 a similar thing had happened, and the limit below which import was not allowed was raised from 50*s.* to 63*s.*, but war was renewed and prices rose again. The 1815 crisis was more permanent, and Parliament met it by prohibiting import as long as wheat did not rise above 80*s.* Often prices kept below this, but a bad season sent them up, and a growing agitation against this protection of the farmer and landlord and exploita-

tion of the consumer marks the rest of our period. The possibilities of importation increased yearly as American wheat became available, and the half-starved workers clamoured for food kept out of the markets by a Parliament of landlords, while the manufacturers



SATIRICAL CARTOON OF 1819

hoped that cheaper food would mean less money-wages and so cheapen production. The climax of the story is later than 1834.

3. The increasing severity of the GAME LAWS is one marked feature of the times. Up to 1770 game had hardly been rigorously preserved in this country, except the royal stag, the sport of kings. The changing attitude is foreshadowed by Fielding in the respective positions towards the poacher of Squires Allworthy

and Western. The sport of the rich became more exclusive, just at the moment when the degradation of the labourer made the wild birds and beasts of the woods essential to his existence. In 1770 an Act was passed making any one killing game at night punishable by 3–6 months' imprisonment on the evidence of one witness only. On a second conviction the penalty was 6–12 months and a public whipping. In 1800 the law was made more stringent, and two people found with a gun, or other evidence of intent to poach, were liable to imprisonment with hard labour, and on a second conviction to two years and a whipping, or the offender might be sentenced to serve in the army or navy. This severe Act tended to make the culprits resort to violence rather than be taken, and to work in gangs for mutual protection. In 1803 such resistance was made punishable by death. In 1816 a man found at night unarmed, but with a net for poaching, was made liable to seven years' transportation. The severity of the Act defeated its purpose, for gradually juries became unwilling to convict, and in 1825 it was modified, and transportation reserved for the second offence. An attempt in 1831 to modify the punishments was defeated in the House of Lords.

That the laws were not a dead letter is shown by the numbers convicted, 8,502 in three years (1827–30), many of them mere boys. And it must be remembered that most of the magistrates were game preservers, with no pity or sympathy for a starving poacher. Also it must be recognized that the labourers themselves attached no shame to the act of poaching. They entirely refused to regard it as stealing: 'the wild beasts of the field were there for the use of all'. They were paid starvation wages, and then if they dared to help themselves to what they regarded as nature's bounty they were condemned to the life of outcasts. At one assize in 1829 seven men were transported for life, nine for fourteen years, for one poaching fray alone. But even savage laws did not seem enough to the gentlemen of England in the battle of 'sport' versus starvation. Some time before 1817 the setting of spring-guns became common, and men were

THE SEVERITY OF THE GAME LAWS Satirical cartoon dedicated '*To the* Most Noble, *the* Right Honourable *the* Honourable Nobility *and* Gentry, associated *for the* Preservation *of the* Game'

killed and wounded in considerable numbers. After some ten years the accidents due to lack of discrimination on the part of the guns, which unfortunately could not distinguish between a trespasser and a gamekeeper, caused so much scandal that the law stepped in and made spring-guns illegal. There were a few men bold and public-spirited enough to speak against this savage upholding of the pleasures of the rich against the depredations of the poor. Turner, member for York in 1782, Fox in 1796, and Sheridan, Curwen, and Romilly raised their voices in vain.

4. The COMBINATION LAWS of 1799 and 1800 have already been described,[1] but even these were not drastic enough for some, and any old law that could be twisted for use against the workers was unsparingly used. In 1819, when distress was great and the Government even more than usual in a panic, the notorious SIX ACTS were passed. By these public meetings that in any way criticized the Government were suppressed, search for arms authorized, all working-class publications subjected to the stamp duty, and the law of seditious libel tightened.

The SUSPENSION in 1802, and the REPEAL in 1813, of the LAWS EMPOWERING JUSTICES TO FIX WAGES were the answers of the Government to the attempts by the workers to call the law to their aid, and in 1814 the laws regulating apprenticeships went too.

5. The changes in the POOR LAW by Act of Parliament were not great. In 1782 Gilbert's Act ordered that able-bodied poor should be found work, not sent to workhouses; hence developed the 'roundsman'[2] and other systems. In 1796 Pitt proposed as an alternative to a minimum wage a reform of the Poor Law, and in 1797 a Bill for that purpose was discussed. It proposed to train children in 'Schools of Industry', to make allowances to families of more than two children, and to find employment for indigent folk. People unable to earn full wages were to have them supplemented from the rates, and money might be advanced to help a poor man to buy a cow or other animal. A man need not be utterly destitute before obtaining help. If

[1] See p. 377. [2] See p. 328.

VAN DIEMAN'S LAND

Bebbington, Printer, 22, Goulden St. Oldham Road Manchester
and sold by H. Andrews, 27, St. Peter Street, Leeds.

Come all you gallant poachers, that ramble void of care,
That walk out on a moonlight night, with your dog, gun, and
snare;
The hare and lofty pheasant you have at your command,
Not thinking of your last career upon Van Dieman's Land.

Poor Thomas Brown, of Nottingham, Jack Williams, and Poor
Joe,
Were three determin'd poachers, as the country well doth know
At night they were trepann'd by the keepers hid in sand,
And fourteen years transported were upon Van Dieman's Land

The first day we landed upon the fatal shore,
The planters came around us—their might be 20 score,
They rank'd us up like horses and sold us out of hand, (Land.
They yok'd us in a plough, brave boys, to plough Van Dieman's

Our cottages we live in are built of clods and clay,
And rotten straw for bedding, yet we dare not say nay,
Around our cots a curling fire--we slumber when we can,
And drive the wolves and tigers oft upon Van Dieman's Land.

Oft times when I do slumber, I have a pleasant dream,
With my sweet girl sitting near me close by a purling stream
Thro' England I've been roaming, with her at my command,
And waken broken-hearted upon Van Dieman's Land.

passed, the Act would have produced much the same results as the Speenhamland scheme,[1] and though the clauses that allowed help to prevent rather than to succour destitution were good, the Bill was too much of a patchwork to receive much support. The opposition was great and Pitt did not even defend his Bill; nothing was done.

He did, however, do something to ease the pressure of the Law of Settlement. In 1795 it was made illegal to remove a person until he became actually chargeable to the parish, and to do so in any case, if he was dangerously ill! The change made movement easier since a parish could no longer turn out a new-comer. He still, of course, was liable to be removed, if he fell out of work long enough to become destitute. An attempt in 1800 to allow temporary help from his adopted parish was defeated.

6. One of the most oppressive measures of the times was the Stamp Duty on newspapers and pamphlets. In 1819 a duty of 4*d*. on every paper or pamphlet costing less than 6*d*. aimed at muzzling the champions of the poor. It did not entirely succeed, for we find the poor combining to read even 7*d*. journals, but it undoubtedly made the spread of movements in favour of reform more difficult.

Administrative Action. In government by oligarchy, such as that of England after the Revolution of 1688, the administration of the laws is apt to be even more oppressive than the laws themselves, and this, for reasons we shall see later, was especially so from 1789 to 1850.

During our period the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended from 1794 to 1802, again in 1816–17, and the rulers were free to arrest and imprison for years any one they found in inconvenient opposition.

The Treatment of Assemblies, peaceable and riotous, was of a kind almost unbelievable by twentieth-century people before the Great War. There was some excuse for this in the inadequate police arrangements, which belonged to a long-past

[1] See p. 328.

era. Our blue-coated constables are the creation of a later time; up to 1829 the only authority lay in a handful of Dogberrys supported by a Justice of the Peace and helped by a number of rascals who were quite as often criminals as detectives of

RECRUITING FOR THE ARMY. Cartoon by Henry Bunbury (1750–1811).

crime. In theory the whole countryside, the 'posse comitatus', could be called out at need. At best a clumsy instrument, it had long been entirely useless. Some districts had no magistrates at all. Such being the police, the authorities naturally turned to the army, and it was none too trustworthy. Billeted out among the people, drawn as Wellington said from the scum

of the earth, the soldiers were as likely as not to side with the rioters. It was for this reason that Pitt introduced in the early days of the French war the system of barracks, in order to detach the army from the intimacies of civil life. In vain Fox objected that a military police was the worst kind of police; the ruling class cared only to secure themselves. Even in barracks the army proved very unreliable, and regiments were constantly moved away from areas in which their loyalty was being corrupted. The militia, drawn from the general body of the nation, was no more to be trusted, and in food riots was apt to side with the mob. There was, however, one force that the authorities could trust, the volunteer cavalry known as the 'Yeomanry'. They were drawn from the well-to-do classes and became the most hated men of their day. In one case in 1809 the Government even used the German Legion to suppress a revolt of the militia and to overawe the crowd at the public floggings that followed.

PETERLOO.

See! see! where freedom's noblest champion stands,
Shout! shout! illustrious patriot band,
Here grateful millions their generous tribute bring,
And shouts for freedom make the welkin ring,
While fell corruption and her hellish crew
The blood-stained trophies gained at Peterloo.

Soon shall fair freedom's sons their right regain,
Soon shall all Europe join the hallowed strain,
Of Liberty and Freedom, Equal Rights and Laws,
Heaven's choicest blessing crown this glorious cause,
While meanly tyrants, crawling minions, too,
Tremble at their feats performed on Peterloo.

Britons be firm assert your rights, be bold
Perish like heroes not like slaves be sold,
Firmly unite, bid millions be free,
Will to your children glorious liberty,
While cowards—despots long may keep in view,
And silent contemplate, the deeds on Peterloo.

What it meant to revolt against starvation in the early nineteenth century may be illustrated by the treatment meted out on four specific occasions. After the Luddite disturbances in Yorkshire in 1812 the general in

charge of the soldiers there adopted the plan of continually moving small bodies of soldiers about at night, calling people up in the small hours to house and feed them. At the same time the magistrates were given power to search for arms and to disperse assemblies without the formality of reading the Riot Act.

Satirical cartoon of 1819.

The story of Peterloo is one of the best known in our social history. In 1819 there was great unrest; prices were high, wages low, and there was a strong agitation on foot for a reform of the franchise. Lancashire Reformers announced a meeting in St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, and a crowd of 60,000 assembled. The people were in their Sunday clothes, about a third of them were women, and there were many children. The promoters of the meeting took every possible precaution to ensure that order should be kept, and the chief speaker, Henry Hunt, offered him-

self the night before to the magistrate as hostage for the crowd's good behaviour. But no sooner had he begun to speak than the Yeomanry dashed forward waving their swords. The crowd made way for them, and Hunt was arrested. Suddenly the Yeomanry turned, hitting wildly at the massed people. As a result of the charge that followed eleven people died, and over 400 were wounded. The Government, instead of calling the magistrates to account for unjustified abuse of their powers, sent their thanks, and Hunt and three others were imprisoned. Fortunately, the Government in this case overreached itself, *The Times* reported the actual facts, and the middle classes, revolted by such careless oppression, rallied to the ranks of reform.

In 1830 came the last revolt of the agricultural worker. The labourers had by that date reached perhaps the lowest level of degradation, and in the summer an outbreak of arson and destruction appeared in Kent. The main attack was on threshing machines, which took from the labourer his principal winter work, but ricks were fired in vengeance on certain farmers. The Government sent soldiers and field-pieces, and arrested on suspicion in the hope of securing information. They were not very successful, though they did not scruple to bully a girl of ten for this purpose. By November the disturbances had spread to Sussex, though here the revolt was organized peaceably. The village rose *en masse* and presented its demands to the farmers, who, under threats of loss of ricks and barns, complied with them. Half a crown a day wages seems to have been the chief request. In these two counties there was considerable sympathy with the revolt, and some of the magistrates urged that wages should be raised, when in their opinion all riot would cease. No local forces could be trusted, and the Government was inundated with demands for troops. After November the revolt spread to Berkshire, Hampshire, and Wiltshire. Here the demand was for 2*s*. a day, for wages in these counties were as low as 7*s*. and 6*s*. a week. The Hampshire rising was marked by the destruction of two workhouses.

At first the farmers adopted a conciliatory attitude, but this did not last long ; the landlords were terrified and sharp measures were taken. Wholesale arrests were made, and the revolt collapsed. Meanwhile it had spread to Dorset and Gloucestershire, and by the New Year to Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. There were sporadic outbreaks in other counties, and letters from the hypothetical 'Captain Swing' reached Yorkshire. But Melbourne had no sympathy with weak-minded magistrates, who thought there was something to be said for a labourer who asked for more than a starvation wage, and Special Commissions were appointed to try the hundreds that, by Christmas, were crowding the jails. The temper of the judges may be gathered from their charges to the grand juries. Most of them were assured that there was little if any distress, that the gentlemen of England were always anxious to lighten the burdens of the poor, that capital and industry must be protected at all cost, and the attacks on clergy and tithes were shocking to all men of Christian sentiment. Every effort was made to induce the men to betray their comrades, with only limited success. Three hundred men were tried at Winchester; of these 101 were condemned to death and two actually executed, one a boy of nineteen, the others transported for life. Of the rest, 36 were transported, 65 imprisoned with hard labour, and 67 acquitted. In Wiltshire 154 men and boys were transported, and transportation for whatever period meant exile for life in most cases, and separation as irrevocable as death from wife and children and kinsfolk. Both in Hampshire and Wiltshire all evidence as to poverty and distress was ruled out of order, and the individual prisoner's fate depended largely on his reputation with the gentry. Well-known poachers or men with influence among their fellows were best at the antipodes. In Dorset the heavy sentences were less numerous ; only twelve were transported. *The Times* correspondent was of opinion that it was hardly worth while to go to the expense of a Special Commission for such poor results. The Commission in Berkshire and Buckingham showed less of the spirit of Judge Jeffreys, and the country gentry there

seem to have been more humane and less frightened. At Reading three men were condemned to death, but the lives of two were saved by the roused public opinion of the county; 56 were transported and 36 sent to prison. Altogether for riots, in which not a single person was killed or seriously wounded, the Government exacted a penalty of nine lives, and the transportation of over 450 men and boys. 'The shadow of this vengeance still darkens the minds of old men and women in the villages of Wiltshire, and eighty years have been too short a time to blot out its train of desolating memories.'[1] It is one of the tragedies of the human story that the Government responsible for what one can only call these atrocities was that which was returned to pass the great Reform Bill, and contained the honoured names of Grey and Holland. The main responsibility lies on Lord Melbourne, who was Home Secretary.

But when the Government set out to find another more important victim, it burnt its fingers rather badly. The life story of William Cobbett cannot be fully told here, though its romance is almost equal to its importance.

He was born at Farnham in Surrey in 1762 and spent seven years in the army, mostly in Nova Scotia, rising speedily to the rank of sergeant-major. He left in 1791 with a profound contempt for his superior officers and a determination to show up the peculation of the quartermaster. He, however, failed to do so, and in 1792 went to the United States. Eight years later he returned to England and set up as a bookseller and stationer in Pall Mall. In 1802 he issued the first number of the *Political Register*, beginning as an ultra-Tory, but after 1806 he changed right over to ultra-Radicalism. With seven years' army experience behind him, in 1810 he made a bitter attack on the Government for their brutal quelling of a mutiny in the militia, and won for himself two years' imprisonment and a fine of £1,000. After this his influence with the working classes became enormous and increasing, and on the suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1817 he sought safety in America for two years. In 1816 he evaded

[1] Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, p. 284.

MR. COBBETT'S EMIGRATION

Mr. Cobbett sailed from Liverpool, for New York, in the Importer, Capt. Hall, on Friday last. He had been here for several preceding days; not sculking, as some of his political opponents have insinuated, but showing himself, and conversing publicly to any person who wished to be introduced to him. He was accompanied by his two sons, who are said to be destined for the American bar. When Mr. Cobbett attended at the Custom-house, to be *passed*, as it is technically termed, Mr. Casey was with him; and when the question was put to him, whether Mr. Cobbett had any thing saleable about him, Mr. Casey replied, "Oh, yes, Sir! he bears about him his mind; had he been disposed to sell that, he need not have left this country for another."

MR. COBBETT'S LETTER.

TO THE PUBLIC.

Liverpool, March 26, 1817.—My departure for America will surprize nobody, but those who do not reflect. A full and explicit statement of my reasons will appear in a few days, probably on the 5th of April. In the meanwhile, I think it necessary for me to make known, that I have fully empowered a person of respectability to manage and settle all my affairs in England. I owe my Countrymen most sincere regard, which I shall always entertain for them in a higher degree than towards any other People upon earth. I carry nothing from my Country but my wife and my children, and, surely, *they* are my own, at any rate. I shall always love England better than any other Country; I will never become a subject or citizen of any other State—but, I and mine were not born under a Government having the absolute power to imprison us at its pleasure, and, if we can avoid it, we will neither live nor die under such an order of things.—If I have not taken leave of numerous friends in London and in the Country, it was because I should have been made unhappy by their importunities and the expressions of their sorrow. I make an enormous sacrifice of property and of feeling; but, when my heart feels the tugs of friendship, and of all the interesting objects in Hampshire, it is reconciled to the loss by the thought that I can enjoy them only during the pleasure of a Secretary of State. When this order of things shall cease to exist, then shall I again see England.

WM COBBETT.

From *The Liverpool Mercury*, April 4, 1817

the stamp duty, which put the price of his paper above the purse of the workers, by issuing an unstamped edition from which all news items were deleted. The Government answered by the Newspaper Stamp Duty of 1819. This Act for a time killed his sales, and in 1820 Cobbett was bankrupt. None the less his political influence during the next ten years was tremendous on the side of reform. He published several books of enduring value, especially his *Rural Rides*, letters written during journeys taken between 1820 and 1826.

Such was the man whom in an evil moment for itself Grey's Government decided in 1831 to prosecute for his articles in the *Political Register* on the recent revolt. Cobbett triumphantly turned the attack on him into one by him on his prosecutors, and when the jury disagreed and he was free, the ministers decided that it was safer in future to leave him alone. Next year he entered Parliament as member for Oldham, and in 1835 he died. One of the most inconsistent of men, there was only one thing certain about William Cobbett, he was always to be found championing the under-dog, and this master of invective struck mighty blows. Cobbett takes rank among the main forces that made the best side of Victorian England, its mixture of feudal sentiment and democratic theory, its philanthropy facing its commercialism, its desperate lack of logic and well-meaning refusal to see inconvenient facts. A big blundering kindly fellow who wanted to see all men comfortable; who hated fiercely the tyrant when he recognized him, but without much insight into the real causes of the tyranny; such was Cobbett and such, in certain aspects, was the England that came after him, the England of Dickens, of Kingsley, of Disraeli in his rôle of social reformer, of Florence Nightingale, and of at least one survival into the twentieth century.

No doubt such vengeance as that described above did not shock a generation, whose Penal Code was among the most barbarous in history, as it shocks their descendants. During the latter part of the eighteenth century Parliament had added the death penalty to hundreds of fresh offences, until almost

every crime could be thus punished at the discretion of the judge. Petty theft carried a capital sentence, and in 1810 and again in 1813 an attempt to abolish this was carried by Romilly in the Commons but thrown out in the Lords, with the help of seven bishops. The ruling class preferred to believe that transportation was regarded by the poor as a pleasant 'migration to a milder climate'. The convict was leased to the Australian farmers practically as a slave, and 'idleness and insolence of expression or even of looks, anything betraying the insurgent spirit, subjects him to the chain gang, or the triangle, or to hard labour on the roads'.[1] A worse fate still could overtake the convict, for he might be condemned not merely to transportation but to a penal settlement.

'Not a single feature that can revolt and stupify the imagination is wanting to the picture. Children of ten committing suicide, men murdering each other by compact as an escape from a hell they could no longer bear, prisoners receiving a death sentence with ecstasies of delight, punishments inflicted that are indistinguishable from torture, men stealing into the parched bush in groups, in the horrible hope that one or two of them might make their way to freedom by devouring their comrades. An atmosphere in which the last glimmer of self-respect and human feeling was extinguished by incessant and degrading cruelty.'[2]

The victims of these brutal laws were for the most part illiterate adults and often mere children. In 1831 the governor of a prison said he had under his charge a boy of ten who had been imprisoned eight times; in 1813 two brothers aged twelve and ten were transported for seven years for stealing some linen; in 1800 a child of ten described by the judge as 'wearing a pinafore' was condemned to death for stealing notes and the sentence commuted to transportation for fourteen years. Such sentences on children were frequent, and in 1814 a boy of fourteen was hanged for stealing. 'A woman whose husband had been transported for felony committed the same felony in the hope

[1] *Correspondence on the Subject of Secondary Punishments*, 1834, p. 22.
[2] Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, p. 182.

of joining him in exile, but the judge thought it necessary to make an example and hanged her instead.'[1]

The man indicted for a felony, and most crimes were felonies, was denied the right to engage a barrister to speak in his defence. His counsel could only cross-examine witnesses, any plea in the prisoner's favour must be made by himself. Such a situation would be fatal to nine out of ten men to-day; at a time when few could read or write the accused was doomed from the first.

OLD BAILEY, SEPT. 24.

The following Priſoners received ſentence of death for the following offences:

John Griffiths for horſe-ſtealing.

Elizabeth Hill for ſtealing goods to the value of 2l 15s. privately in a ſhop.

Sarah Dancer for the ſame offence.

Thomas Pearſon for a robbery in an open field near the King's highway.

John Spencer for ſheep-ſtealing.

Erick Hanſon Falk for forgery.

John Lewis for unlawfully aſſembling with twenty other perſons and more, to the diſturbance of the public peace, and beginning to demoliſh and to pull down a dwelling-houſe.

Thomas Haſtel for a burglary.

Henry Hale for the ſame offence.

Richard Smith for ſtealing goods of the value of 40s. and upwards, in a dwelling-houſe, &c.

William Tooke for the ſame offence.

'*Petty theft carried a capital sentence.*' Newspaper cutting of the nineties.

Of all the administrative iniquities of the time none was worse than the constant USE OF SPIES. At all times of popular excitement they were extensively used, they were well paid, and there is now little doubt that they invented or instigated most of the crimes they denounced. The local magistrates were credulous beyond bounds, and the Home Office, especially under Sidmouth, saw in every half-starved striker a potential Jacobin. From 1801 till the arrival of Peel at the Home Office, there was no check to their activities. 'It is beyond dispute that the Government spies helped to create the plots which they pre-

[1] Hammond, *The Town Labourer*, p. 76.

land. Glasgow was one of the places where treasonable practices were said to prevail to the greatest extent; and yet there, only 50 were taken up upon a charge of swearing unlawful oaths; and these oaths, there was no doubt, were administered by hired spies and informers.—(*Hear, hear.*) Ten of these persons had been confined and liberated; only one was brought to trial, and against that one (Edgar) there were three indictments, a circumstance sufficiently indicative of the weakness of the government. Another case in that city (Neil Douglas) was that of a man accused of uttering seditious expressions from the pulpit. This charge was supported on the testimony of SIX HIRED INFORMERS, who were contradicted in their evidence by such numerous and respectable witnesses, that the public prosecutors gave up the cause with shame. Here was another impeachment of the former report on which our liberties were suspended.—(*Hear.*) A noble friend of his had reprobated the employment of spies; but he had been answered that they were a necessary evil, and that it was quite Utopian to expect to unravel a conspiracy by any other means. He (Lord G.) had thought that this practice had been condemned by orators and statesmen, by writers and great men of every age and nation; that it was a practice sanctioned only by the most despotic governments; that it poisoned the sources of confidence between man and man; that it was destructive of domestic happiness and individual security, and altogether inconsistent with the existence of public freedom.—(*Hear, hear.*) Would it be endured that these men, enriched with the blood-money of their fellow-subjects, these harpies, who contaminated and polluted more than they destroyed, should continue thus unmolested to infest and destroy?—(*Loud cries of hear.*) He maintained that they ought forthwith to be consigned to the punishment their offence demanded. Was what he alleged without foundation? Had not Castles, a man of the most infamous and detestable character, been relied on as a witness on the late trials? a man who had hanged one, and transported another accomplice in forgery; who had been imprisoned two years for assisting in the escape of a French prisoner, and punished for having tempted another to break his parole; who (though it had not been exactly proved) lay strongly under the imputation of bigamy and perjury; and who had lived in, and been bully to, a house of infamous description. It had very soon been suggested, that the things which he charged others to be guilty of, might have been perpetrated by himself; and so in truth they were. It was he who put the ammunition, as it had been called, into the waggon. The ammunition, indeed, was of such a nature and quantity, that it could have been placed there with no other view but that of supplying some ground for an information; and there was the strongest presumption *for believing that it had been placed there by him alone, and without the knowledge of any of his acquaintance;* for when the party proceeded to the Tower, they left their ammunition behind them.—(*Hear. hear.*) Besides, on all occasions he was the most forward. It was he himself that uttered the most seditious language, and gave the most inflammatory toasts. From this example, it was not an unreasonable inference to suspect, that the information on which the whole body of the people was to be put out of the pale of its liberties, was not of a very different description. He should now communicate to the House a statement he had received from Sheffield. If the person principally named in it, one Oliver, was not in the pay of government, he would give up the whole.—(*Loud cries of hear, hear.*) He wished that his name might be recorded as the foulest of traitors, and the most atrocious of criminals; a person setting at defiance the laws of God and man, and converting the death and destruction of his fellow creatures into his own emolument. The Noble Lord here read from the *Leeds Mercury* the statement respecting Mr. Oliver, the substance of which we published last Friday, and commented on that person's conduct in terms of the greatest severity, comparing it with Castle's. As to the evidence and correspondence from magistrates, he begged not to be considered as throwing out any imputations against that body; but he thought their recommendations should be attended to with suspicion: they all resided in the disturbed districts; they were all alarmed, and all prone to look for remedies in extraordinary exertions of power. All the documents tended to show the necessity of discarding a practice that had never been tolerated in any period of society—the encouragement of, and reliance on informers.—(*Loud cries of hear, hear.*)

The Earl of LIVERPOOL defended the bill. His Lordship said, as to *Oliver*, (of whom the Noble Earl had spoken so much,) this was the first time that he had ever heard of his being implicated in the degree so justly reprobated: he could only say that the person in question *had rendered the most essential services to government during the last three or four months.* To a certain extent he had certainly been employed by the administration: but instead of being incited, he had been particularly discouraged from acting in any way analogous to that described by the Noble Earl. The statement which was read was ex-parte testimony: it might be correct, it might be otherwise: but even if true, he (Lord Liverpool) was prepared to assert, that spies and informers had been at all times employed by all governments, and ever must be. And this being granted, it would, and must sometimes happen, that such persons, from zeal in their business, would sometimes go farther than they ought.—(*Hear, hear, from the Opposition.*)

Lord GRENVILLE declared himself in favour of the bill.

The Duke of SUSSEX had read the report of the committee with deep regret. He ascribed no unfair motives to the framers of it; but it contained contradictions, and stated facts without proofs, on the evidence of improper witnesses. He could not consent, on all that had appeared, to vote away the liberties of the subject.

The House then divided,

Content..... 109	Proxies Content 81
Not Content 27	Not Content ... 23
Majority 82	Majority 58

Total Majority 190 to 50.—Adjourned.

INFORMERS. Earl Grey's speech to the House of Lords, June 1817. *Liverpool Mercury*

tended to discover, and that many of the plots of which information was given never existed in fact.'[1]

We have spoken of the famine prices during the period in 1796, in 1800–1, 1812, and 1817, and for these the war and foreign policy of the Government were largely responsible. From the moment that England plunged into war with the French revolutionaries, prices were bound to rise, and as the fighting spread throughout Europe England's markets and her sources of supply shut down one after another. When, in 1806, Napoleon tried to kill British trade by closing against it the ports of Europe, and England replied with the ORDERS IN COUNCIL, his object was for a time achieved. For five years trade languished, and but for the high farming of the time we might have gone down in the struggle of endurance. As it was, Europe, starved of all the products of English factories (even the French armies were clothed by British goods smuggled across), revolted first, and in a desperate attempt to enforce his blockade Napoleon threw away his Empire at Moscow. Though we paid by a war with the United States, the Orders in Council had fulfilled their object, at what cost of human suffering cannot now be estimated.

The effect of the cessation of the war was terrible. The Government, which had been spending fifty millions a year to keep up the army, suddenly ceased doing so, and the disbanded men, instead of forming an equivalent market, joined the unemployed and competed for such work as was going. Europe in 1815, as in 1919, was too poor to buy, and when it began to revive wanted raw material rather than manufactured goods. The years from 1815 to 1834 were times of terrible stress.

The Mind of the Governing Classes. The facts told in the preceding pages call for some explanation. Who were these rulers who arrogated to themselves the sole decision as to the nation's welfare, and how came they in practice so to play the tyrant? The rulers of England in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century were the landowning aristocrats. 'In England there was no institution, central or local, which the

[1] Chapman, *The Lancashire Cotton Industry*, p. 189.

aristocracy did not control.'[1] Out of 513 English and Welsh members in 1832 it is true that 415 represented cities and

BOROUGH OF ILCHESTER.

Mr. BENNET said, that he was instructed to present a petition from the rector, churchwardens, overseers, and some of the principal inhabitants of the borough of Ilchester, complaining of a very serious grievance. No doubt some gentlemen were present on the opposite side of the house, who would be able to contradict some of the main facts contained in the petition, and he hoped for the honour of human nature that they could be disproved. The house was aware that Ilchester returned two members to Parliament; it was a patronised place, or in other words, if he might be permitted to use them, it was the property of a particular family. It appeared from the petition, though he did not vouch for the correctness of the statements it contained, that the proprietor thought a small number of constituents more advantageous, and to accomplish this object he had pulled down a number of houses, by which about 100 families had been driven from their homes, and were received into a sort of temporary poor-house, where they were sheltered for a time, yet only 18 or 20 of them had been paupers, the rest maintaining themselves by honest industry. Notice however was given, in consequence of prevailing political dissensions, that these unhappy families would be deprived even of that shelter; the parish resisted, and an ejectment being brought, they were finally turned out: thus 163 men, women, and children, from extreme infancy to extreme age, had been driven into the open streets in the mos inclement season of the year;

BARNSTAPLE ELECTION.

Lord CLIVE moved, that the report of the committee on the election for Barnstaple be taken into further consideration. The noble lord read the two special resolutions to which the committee, of which he sat as Chairman, had come, and supported them by facts detailed in the evidence. These two resolutions were—

"1. That it appears to this committee that Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopes, bart., was by his agents guilty of bribery and treating, at the last election for the borough of Barnstaple, and is thereby incapitated to serve in Parliament at such election."

"2. That it appears by evidence before this committee that such a general system of corruption was practised at the last election for the said borough of Barnstaple, as to render it incumbent on the committee to submit the same to the most serious consideration of the house, in order that such proceedings may be instituted thereon as the house in its wisdom may think proper to adopt."

The testimony of the witnesses examined before the committee, he said, completely justified these resolutions. Of the number of resident voters, which did not much exceed 300, 66 had received bribes from Sir M. M. Lopes, who had expended 3,000l. at the last election, in bribery and treating, through a banker, Mr. J. Gribble, who was examined by the committee. The out voters, who amounted to about 140, received 20l. a-piece; the resident electors 5l. Mr. Gribble stated, that the London voters in Sir M. Lopes's interest claimed and received 2l. more a-piece, because Mr. Ommaney's said they had been so paid.

From *The Times* of April 3, 1819.

boroughs, but those boroughs were almost all in the hands of big landowners. By various interpretations of old franchises, by limitations either of area or of numbers, the freemen of most

[1] Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, p. 7.

boroughs were few in number, and easily controlled by a wealthy patron. If necessary new freemen were admitted in numbers to swamp an election, and if residence was necessary, magnates like Lord Lonsdale, who moved a colony of Cumberland miners into Haslemere, could easily secure it. That ' pocket boroughs ' were a valuable possession is shown by the fact that Pitt proposed to compensate the patrons of those that were disfranchised. The anomalies were absurd. The members for Rye and Dunwich represented six and fourteen electors respectively. Manchester and Birmingham had no representative. The one elector of Old Sarum was qualified by the ownership of a ploughed field. In 1710 an Act of Parliament had limited members to those owning land worth either £600 or £300 per annum.

But it was not only in Parliament that the aristocracy were dominant. The old manor courts had gone with the commonfields, and all county and parish affairs were in the hands of the Justices of the Peace, the High Sheriff, and the Lord-Lieutenant. These were county gentlemen and clergy, and their power was utterly uncontrolled. Squire Western's estimate of his own powers may be remembered, but, not in fiction but in actual fact, in 1822 the Duke of Buckingham tried and convicted a man for coursing on his own estate ; the trial was held in his Grace's kitchen, and the witnesses were his Grace's gamekeepers.

Such being their power, what of their ideas of using it ? The arrogance of the Whig aristocracy of the eighteenth century displayed in the literature and the records of the time is almost incredible. With the advent of the Hanoverian monarchs went all respect for the Crown, for the princes of the House of Brunswick might be royal but were certainly not gentlemen, and the great Whig houses were left with none to check them. Unlike the hangers-on at the Court of Versailles, the English aristocrat was a territorial magnate holding supreme power in his little world, and one who, together with a small coterie of his own class, decided the destinies of nations. To them the poor man was of another race, destitute for the most part of all the virtues and only tolerable as a submissive minister to the leisured ease

of his superiors. A few quotations from the writings of the time will show this best.

When the commons are enclosed 'the labourers will work every day in the year, their children will be put out to labour early', and 'that subordination of the lower ranks of society which in the present time is so much wanted would be thereby

OLD SARUM. *'The one elector was qualified by the ownership of a ploughed field.'*

considerably secured' (Report on Shropshire, by J. Bishton, to the Board of Agriculture, 1794).

'All experience proves that in the lower orders the deterioration of morals increases with the quantity of unemployed time of which they have command.'[1]

'It is to high wages that many of the criminal habits so often ascribed to the collier may in part be ascribed. To economy he is an utter stranger' (Rev. Thomas Gisborne in 1798,[2] when wages were 16*s.* a week at most and prices at war level).

[1] Quoted from 'An Enquiry into the Principle and Tendency of the Bill for imposing certain restrictions on Cotton Factories, 1818, by Hutchins and Harrison in *A History of Factory Legislation*, p. 28.

[2] *Reports of the London Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor*, vol. i, p. 170.

When the framework knitters were earning 14s. a week for a twelve- or thirteen-hour day, this is the account of their vile habits, given by a parson-magistrate, the Rev. J. T. Becker:

'Abundance thus rapidly acquired by those who were ignorant of its proper application hastened the progress of luxury and licentiousness and the lower orders were almost universally corrupted by profusion and depravity scarcely to be credited by those who are strangers to our district. Among the men the discussion of politics, the destruction of game, or the dissipation of the ale houses was substituted for the duties of their occupation during the former part of the week, and in the remaining three or four days a sufficiency was earned for defraying current expenses.'[1]

The depopulation of the countryside was attributed, not to enclosures, but to the vanity and pleasure-seeking of the rural population; the miserable living of some hundreds of squatters on the waste[2] was made a pretext for condemning all small holdings. Even what we should now regard as a virtue, the loyalty of the workers to each other, 'seemed to the upper and middle classes little short of a crime'.

The attitude of the controlling classes towards the children of the 'lower orders' has been sufficiently exemplified in the story of the fight for factory legislation and for the chimney-sweeps. To it may be added the claim of a Mr. Tufnell, one of the Factory Commissioners of 1833, that children working at a mule as piecers for twelve hours a day were doing nothing three-quarters of every minute, since they then were merely watching the mules recede, hence they really only worked three hours a day, or if they minded two mules they worked six hours.[2]

There was, however, another factor besides native arrogance and selfishness that encouraged a tyrannical attitude among the authorities. It is difficult for us now to realize the panic produced in England by the progress of the French Revolution.

[1] Quoted from the Home Office Papers 42. 120 in *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 225.

[2] See p. 272.

A satirical cartoon of 1819, a reply to the resolutions in favour of Universal Suffrage which were being passed by the Reform party all over the country

We have seen lately something of such terror in the attitude of a section of our people to the revolution in Russia. But Russia is not just across the Channel, and the world is a hundred years nearer democracy than it was in 1793. To the large majority of educated English the September massacres in France sounded the trump of doom to all that was fine and beautiful in existence, and like most men in a panic their one idea was force, war to the death against the violators of law and order, repression to the uttermost of the smallest echo at home of the continental shout of liberty. From that moment in the eyes of all magistrates and lawgivers the labouring class were not fellow Englishmen who looked to them for justice, but potential rebels to be relentlessly crushed. 'Policing the poor' was the main work of the authorities. But for the horror, as it seemed to them, across the Channel, it is probable some effort might have been made to mitigate the misery of the transition from hand-work to machinery. As it was the authorities were afraid that any attempt in this direction would open the floodgates for the terrible cry, 'Liberty, Fraternity, Equality', and like all men under the influence of terror they became cruel. It was this terror of anarchy that made a man like Wilberforce rank himself on the side of oppression and smugly justify in the name of his religion cruelties that he deemed unavoidable without great risk. He preferred that a dozen innocent should suffer rather than one possible rebel escape, and he would throw the whole weight of his wealth and reputation into the effort to ruin some wretched bookseller who had sold a copy of Paine's *Age of Reason*. Thus he supported keenly the Combination Laws, resisted every effort to secure fair trials for suspects, and upheld Sidmouth in his use of spies and agents provocateurs.

There were, however, a few men in exalted positions for whom no after excesses could dim the glorious light of the early years of the new France:

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> And to be young was very heaven.

Wordsworth might forget, but Fox and Sheridan, Grey and

Holland, Romilly and Whitbread kept the dim light burning, and fought again and again the cause of the oppressed. The reaction that followed the terror and lived on through the long years of war passed away at last; the light welcomed by dissolute Fox and frivolous Sheridan, though rejected by pious Wilberforce and patriot Pitt, proved to be no false dawn—the day of the people had risen.

The new wealth that its owners were so afraid of losing was certainly worth keeping. Colossal fortunes were made by men utterly unused either to luxury or to power, and to men so caught in the new whirlwind it was difficult to believe that their own good fortune was not also the good fortune of the nation. It is not altogether incomprehensible that they should come to believe that everything that stood between them and the faster piling up of wealth, whether it were small cottagers or highly paid workmen, was a handicap on the country. What is a little strange is, that they should have induced almost the entire nation to believe it too.

Cartoon of Fox as the demagogue.

Such being the view held by the majority of the rich and middle class of those on whose exertions their leisure and comfort depended, it is not surprising that while throughout Europe there was a wave of enthusiasm for the education of all classes, England steadily opposed any change. The new aggregations of people, miscalled towns, had absolutely no provision for education, and some 50 per cent. of the population of Lancashire and Cheshire could not sign their own names. In 1807 Whitbread tried to get Parliament to establish elementary schools through-

out England. The project was killed by a combination of those who feared that an educated working-class would refuse to be properly subordinate, with Churchmen, who objected to any one having anything to do with education but themselves. Something was, however, effected in 1808 by the Evangelicals and the Nonconformists, and in 1811 by the Church, and the British and Foreign Schools Society and the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church were founded at these dates. In 1816 Brougham, who throughout his life advocated universal rate-paid education, got a Commission appointed to look into charitable endowments, and so rescued for education funds that had nearly been lost.

Such education as the poor were allowed was of the most meagre description. Hannah More taught reading but not writing, and she wished them to be trained ' in habits of industry and piety '. Mrs. Trimmer asked ' that the lower sort of children might be so far civilized as not to be disgusting '.[1]

The great specific of the age for the sorrows of the poor was charity, and there was truly a great deal of it. Some of it, like that of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, was the Pauline kind which beareth all things; much of it was not. The rich undoubtedly accepted the distribution of some of their superfluity among their neighbours as a duty incumbent on their position, for which they exacted full payment in gratitude and servility.

The attitude of a really high-principled woman of the time is best judged in her own words. To the women of Shipham, a mining village in the Mendips, thus spoke in a time of famine (1801) Hannah More, philanthropist and writer of moral stories :

' I wish you to understand also that you are not the only sufferers. You have indeed borne your share and a very hard one it has been in the late difficulties ; but it has fallen in some degree on all ranks, nor would the gentry have been able to afford such large supplies to the distresses of the poor, had they not denied themselves, for your sakes, many indulgences to which their fortune at other times entitled them. We trust the

[1] Hammond, *The Town Labourer*, p. 58.

AN

ACCOUNT

OF A

COTTAGE AND GARDEN,

NEAR TADCASTER.

WITH

OBSERVATIONS

UPON LABOURERS HAVING FREEHOLD COTTAGES AND GARDENS,

AND UPON A PLAN FOR SUPPLYING COTTAGERS WITH COWS.

PRINTED AT THE DESIRE OF THE SOCIETY FOR BETTERING THE CONDITION, AND INCREASING THE COMFORTS OF THE POOR.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. BECKET, BOOKSELLER, PALL-MALL

1797.

PRICE ONE SHILLING A DOZEN.

'The great specific of the age for the sorrows of the poor was charity'

poor in general, especially those that are well-instructed, have received what has been done for them as a matter of favour not of right—if so, the same kindness will, I doubt not, always be extended to them, whenever it shall please God so to afflict the land.'[1]

By this time some of you will be asking how it was that England was regarded on the Continent as the home of liberty, and what did the great eighteenth-century orators, like Burke, mean when they praised the English constitution as the keystone of the arch of freedom. Certainly no one could say that the majority of Englishmen between 1750 and 1830 enjoyed any freedom at all. When Burke and Pitt and the rest talked of free Englishmen, they meant educated Englishmen, or at least moneyed Englishmen. Of them it was magnificently true that they were free to do and say things that in any other country in Europe would have sent them to long imprisonment. The seventeenth century secured for men of the upper classes almost complete protection from tyranny. Byron and Shelley might shock their public with every kind of political audacity, might express views not out of place in fifth-century Athens, no one thought of prosecuting them; but a magistrate in 1817 could seize and flog two men for distributing Cobbett's pamphlets, and the Vagrancy Laws could be twisted so as to rid the countryside of any poor man objectionable to the authorities.

In the Middle Ages and still on into the seventeenth century there was considerable freedom in the incorporated boroughs. By 1800 there was little left. The management had fallen into the hands of a remnant dominated by some great landowner. The working-man was hardly ever a freeman, and so had no vote in borough affairs. The shipwrights of Liverpool were a notable exception, and as a result were able successfully to resist for a long time the degradation of their standard of life. The whole control was usually in the hands of a corrupt clique, who made much money out of their position. Unincorporated towns, such as was Manchester, were governed by the agent of the lord of the manor. Civil life was dead throughout most of the land.

[1] Hammond, *The Town Labourer*, p. 229.

To sum up we may say that the eighteenth century in England was the time of the lowest moral standard in our history, when all cruelties were justified by the plea that property must be protected. The whole economic outlook of the age is summed up by a modern writer: 'Our ancestors passed laws to establish just

I'm very sorry you Highness but we dare not cut the mans head off, altho" he did bring you the wrong turban.
Not cut a slaves head off !!! I'll go to England there I shall find Freedom.
ITALIAN RESTRICTION. the unfortunate Dey of Algiers.

ENGLISH LIBERTY. Cartoon by William Heath, 1831.

prices; their successors legislated to secure reasonable profits.'[1]

The Church and Religion. But in any attempt to tell the story of the English race some attention must be paid to the part played by religion. What had happened to the Church since we looked at it last? The political history of the two centuries that succeeded the Reformation is soaked with religious and ecclesiastical questions, but on the economic side there is little to note. The parochial organization had remained unchanged; on the surface things had not altered much since

[1] Prothero, *English Farming*, p. 271.

Elizabeth's time. Tithe was still paid, though in at least a fourth of the parishes it went to laymen, for the dissolution of the monasteries had handed over much of the great tithes to their lay successors. There was considerable talk of the commutation of tithes, for payment in corn and other produce was a great nuisance to the farmer and not always convenient to the tithe-holder, and in some of the Enclosure Acts land was attached to the living in lieu of tithes. Not till 1836 was any general commutation effected. Another unsatisfactory condition in the Church of the eighteenth century was the number of pluralities and absentee vicars and even bishops. Bishop Watson of Llandaff never lived in his diocese during the whole thirty-four years he was its spiritual pastor. The bishops, however, might claim to be in the tradition of the Middle Ages, feudal lords with some small spiritual duties; the parish priests of the eighteenth century could make no such claim. The pre-Reformation village priest was usually a peasant, and lived with and for his poorer parishioners. He did not always rise to his ideal, and Chaucer's 'parsone' may have been above the average, but the rector or vicar of the eighteenth century looked not to the poor but to the rich. At best he was a cultured gentleman whose philosophy bore the stamp of Greece and Rome rather than of Nazareth; at worst he was a drunken fox-hunter or a grovelling hanger-on of the rich. As spiritual guides there is not much to choose between a Henry Tilney, a Mr. Collins, and a Blifil. But whatever their moral or spiritual value, any effective influence was prevented by continual absence; 332 men drew the revenues of 1,496 parishes, and 500 more those of 1,524. Clergy of rank held four or five livings, among them Wellington's brother, who was rector of three parishes and Prebendary of Durham. 'In 1812 out of 10,000 incumbents nearly 6,000 were non-resident.'[1] True they did not leave the parishes entirely destitute, and curates at salaries of £40–£60 a year performed some of the most urgent duties, though they too stayed away when they could. But even a curate cultivated the

[1] Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, p. 197.

outlook of the rich, for in the squire lay his only hope of preferment.

But if the spiritual life of the Church was almost extinct there were two movements, one within and one without it, that made for revival. The period of the Industrial Revolution was also that of the Evangelical Church and the Methodist move-

'*Another unsatisfactory condition was the number of pluralities and absentee vicars.*' Cartoon of the eighteenth century.

ments. Both had certain economic reactions that we must note. These two revolts against the scepticism and indifference of the age were both based on the doctrines of Calvin, and presented alike the dual features of a fatalistic theory and the transfer of the centre of life to a future existence. Evangelicalism enabled men and women of the wealthy classes to view with complacence the unequal distribution of wealth and happiness, since everything was arranged by an all-wise Providence, who asked only of man an unquestioning acquiescence, while Methodism turned the eyes of the sweated worker towards a glorious future in

which the joys of heaven should compensate him for the misery of his earthly existence. Reformers, not without some excuse, denounced Methodism as a hindrance to their work, in that men drugged themselves with dreams of heaven so that they were indifferent to their state on earth. It would not be easy to under-estimate the effect of a creed that attributed the respective positions of ' the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate ' to the decrees of the Deity, and made philanthropists more anxious to give a knowledge of Genesis than a fair wage to the starving poor. Most of us know survivals of the believers in this creed even now.

Economic Theory. But religious dogma was not left to itself to supply motives for maintaining the existing state. Such vast changes in the material conditions of a people were bound to stimulate inquiring minds to seek for the causes and to explain the astonishing phenomena. Out of the Industrial Revolution came Political Economy, ' the dismal science '.

We have seen that already by 1775 the break-down of the mercantilist system was evident, and the old Government and municipal restrictions had become a serious handicap on enterprise. All who had to do with industry or commerce were keenly aware that for them at least regulation had ceased to be an advantage. In 1776 one of the great books of the world was published, and it gave ample reasons why the old system should disappear.

Adam Smith (1723–90) was a Scottish Professor of Philosophy, whose mind had been turned to economics by contact with merchants at home and thinkers abroad. In 1776 he published the work that made him famous, *The Wealth of Nations*. Its full title is ' An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations '. His great achievement was to demonstrate that by division of labour had come all advance in civilization, and that by this division more production was effected, even though merchants and traders, for example, seemed to create no new things. Contrary to prevailing theory he held that foreign trade benefited both parties to it, not merely the one that sold most. His main thesis brings into the field of productive activity all

workers, whether by hand or brain, though, misled by the influence of the physiocrats,[1] he does not always see whither his general theory leads, and occasionally dubs as 'unproductive' those whose production is confined to non-material things, such as administrators, doctors, artists, &c.

He wrote before the industrial revolution, but even so his sympathy was strongly with the wage-earners, and he urges their claim to a larger part of the produce of their activities than a mere subsistence wage. He does, however, see a limit (in a possible scarcity of capital available) to the amount above a 'fodder basis' to which they may hope to attain. On the other hand, he attacks high profits, and has but a poor opinion of the commercial and industrial master-class. He definitely states that, while rent increases with productivity, in prosperous countries competition of capital keeps profits low. Hence he argues that the interest of the landlord and of the nation is usually identical, but that of the commercial class may be directly opposed to national welfare.

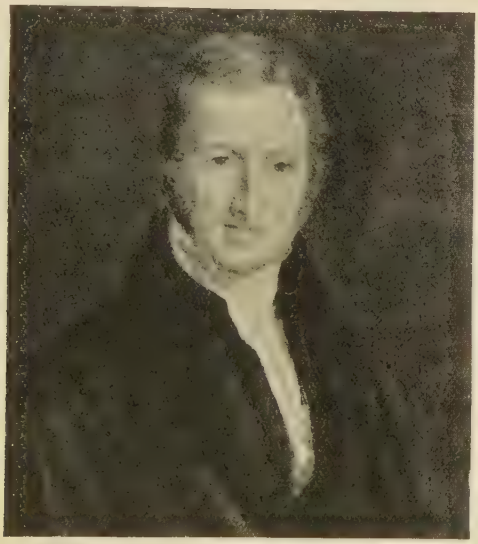
His second great demonstration was to show that all economic institutions had a 'natural' origin; they arose not from organization, but from the spontaneous action of millions of individuals, each obeying his instinct. And since in the eighteenth century everything that was 'natural' tended to be regarded as perfect, Smith was convinced that the great secret of economic welfare was to leave things alone. So left, each man, following his individual instinct, would work out the happiness of the collective whole. On this basis of spontaneity he showed, or thought he showed, that the market price of goods, if left to the free play of supply and demand, would always approximate to the 'natural price', i. e. to the cost of production. He admitted exceptions, but regarded them as few and unimportant. Population and the supply of money also tended thus to adapt themselves to supply and demand. Since this adaptability shows itself in every part of the economic field, he proceeds to ask, What is the driving instinct that forces men so to act individually as to

[1] A school of French thinkers in the eighteenth century, who held that the only occupation that produced an increase of wealth was agriculture. 'Labour applied anywhere except to land is sterile' (Le Trosne).

produce collective prosperity? He concludes that it is 'the natural effort of every individual to better his own condition'. Though this may not be the dominating factor in determining the conduct of every individual, it is so, he asserts, in the great common majority, however it may be mixed with other interests and passions. But while we nowadays, with 150 years more experience to examine, know that however 'natural' the individual greed of man, it can become collectively intolerable, Smith saw in its 'naturalness' the mark of a beneficent providence. Following this he sets out to prove that capital and industry if left to themselves will pour into the most desirable channels, though his tests of desirability would now be challenged. There was, however, a limit to his belief in the beneficence of the state of things existing in 1776. He applies his optimism merely to production, he makes no pretence of doing so to distribution. As a matter of fact distribution concerns him much less; the problems of the eighteenth century were concerned with the trammels on production and the swathing bands in which trade still functioned; not for another fifty years did the problems of distribution reach their acutest point.

The natural conclusion of his investigations is the complete freedom of trade and industry from all governmental interference. According to Smith the State has been almost invariably a muddler; if it manages land or industry there is a loss of productivity at once, for without personal interest nothing gets done. If it interferes by regulation it drives into wrong channels capital, which left to itself, would automatically find its way to more useful ones. This was his big attack on the mercantilist system, the practical result of his theory of *laisser-faire* (let alone). But it must be pointed out that he held that there were two essentials without which private enterprise and public weal would not be linked together. First, the entrepreneur must have a real personal interest; he must be neither idle supplier of capital nor salaried manager, and competition must be allowed to act freely to keep him within the limits of fair play. For joint-stock companies with sleeping shareholders Smith had no use, a modern 'combine' would have called forth

his deepest denunciation. The only joint-stock companies he could tolerate were banks, water companies, and such things as demanded too much capital for one or two men to supply. He confines the functions of the State to a minimum of defence and justice and a few communal objects such as streets, ports, harbours, postal organization, with possibly education and the Church when private enterprise fails to undertake them.



MALTHUS

It is easy to see how such a doctrine of intelligent selfishness would be welcomed by the possessing class. Ignoring Adam Smith's many reservations and exceptions, they claimed his authority for allowing full play to the new forces, and defended as enlightened self-interest all the short-sighted greed of the new adventurers. Every man they held must be free to use his powers and possessions as he pleased, though they ignored the claims of *laisser-faire* when the workers tried to exercise their enlightened self-interest by combining.

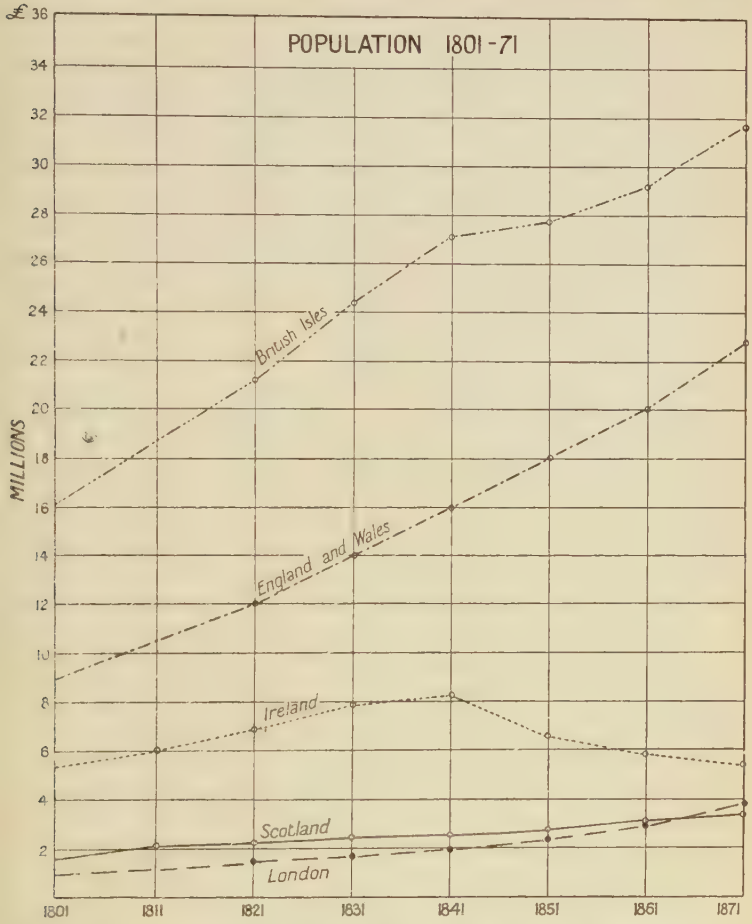
But if Adam Smith, perverted, supplied the exploiters of the

new wealth with theories to bolster up their robberies, the next thinker threw a still greater boulder in the path of justice. Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834), a Cambridge Fellow, and later, Professor of History and Political Economy, published in 1798 a theory, which, if crudely interpreted, absolved every one from any duty to attempt to raise the standard of life of the wage-earner.

We have already noticed the enormous increase in population that marks the last years of the eighteenth century; Malthus thought he had made the discovery that while human beings multiplied in geometrical progression, the food supply could only be increased in an arithmetical one, and explained the phenomena before him as being the result of a law of nature that population tended always to outrun its food supply. Mercantilist thought approved a rapidly increasing population as supplying both the army and the factory. In the past, however, population had increased slowly, and now, when it was rising at an unheard-of rate, the people were obviously getting poorer. Malthus maintained that this was inevitable. There was a vicious circle, increasing wealth brought still more rapidly increasing population, too many people meant insufficient food and increased disease, hence wastage of people till the numbers sank below the food supply and then the circle began again. Obviously if this was the case, it was no use trying to raise the condition of the bulk of the population, since that only meant more children and less food per head. The only remedy he had to offer was postponement of marriage and small families.

Malthus was the earliest of the series of pessimist economists that gave to the science its title of 'dismal'. His outlook was dominated by the evil administration of the Poor Law, which, as we have seen, encouraged reckless marriages and the birth of illegitimate children. Malthus would have abolished all public assistance and greatly reduced private charity, for he saw no hope of limiting population but by the drastic threat of starvation. What he did not see was the fact, which a century of further experience has established, that individual well-being

is a far stronger check on reproduction than hopeless poverty can ever be. As the standard of life rises the individuals almost



automatically refuse to endanger it by reckless or early marriage, and the size of families in the twentieth century tends to decrease as we go up the social scale, and the birth-rate is highest in the slum and lowest in the professional classes. This is not an

unmixed blessing, but it removes the stultifying belief of Malthus that all effort to improve the status of the proletariate was doomed to failure since it would only result in larger families. For nearly a century this belief stood in the way of reform, and was regarded as a conclusive refutation of all arguments for communistic reforms. The ' prudential checks ' which Malthus advocated but hardly hoped to see adopted, since man's passions seemed always stronger than their reason, have come without conscious effort by the mere working out of social forces.

David Ricardo (1772–1823) was the son of a Jewish immigrant from Holland, of Portuguese extraction, and by profession a stockbroker. As a thinker on economic subjects he takes high rank. His outlook was that of the rising middle class of his time, bounded by the facts of his age. He assumed competition, enlightened self-interest, things as they were; he isolated economic considerations from all others, moral or philosophic, and proceeded to analyse the system before him. His great contribution was his doctrine of Rent. Rent he held to be the price paid to the landlord for the use of land better than the poorest cultivated. When there was more than enough land to go round people cultivated the best only and no rent was paid, each man took the piece he wanted. Presently all the best land was occupied and poorer had to be taken. Immediately the owner of the best land could charge a price for its use equal to the extra amount of produce that could be got out of it above that obtainable from the poorer, with the same labour and capital. When poorer land still was taken up, then the owner of the second lot could charge rent and the owner of the best put his up, the amount being always measured by the superior productivity of the land over that of the very poorest cultivated at all. Hence since high prices of food made it worth while to cultivate still poorer lands, therefore high prices sent up rents So, in exact opposition to Adam Smith, he concluded that the interest of the nation at large was antagonistic to that of the landlords. On the other hand, low prices were good for the capitalist in industry, since then wages could be low. So capitalist

and nation generally had the same interest. Moral, repeal the Corn Laws. (Ricardo published his *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* in 1817.) So far Ricardo does not seem to be contributing to the 'dismal' side of his subject, but his other great theory was less happy. Accepting Malthus's theory of population and Adam Smith's *laisser-faire*, he believed that wages should be left to the settlement of free competition, and that their amount depended on the ratio between total capital of the country and the number of wage-earners, that is to say wages were fixed by factors over which no one had any control. Obviously, on this basis there was an unbridgeable gulf between the interests of capitalist and worker, for the more one had as profits, the less the other had as wages. At the same time he held that rising profits meant national progress, though such progress was bound to be at diminishing speed, while wages inevitably tend to approach the minimum sum on which man can live and perpetuate the race. This 'brazen law of wages', as Lassalle called it, has been the main point of socialistic attack on capitalist organization ever since, as being enough in itself alone to condemn it.

The third theory of Ricardo, and one which had great after influence, was that labour is the measure of value, that the relative values of things depend on the amount of labour that goes to their production.

Both with Malthus and Ricardo there were many modifications of the above general laws, but the dominant party seized eagerly on these theoretical justifications for what they wanted to do and ignored all reservations. Ricardo had considerable effect on the policy of labour, in the direction of political agitation to get rid of the oligarchy.

It is time, however, to look at a different school of thought. The apostles of *laisser-faire*, though they were victors in the fight and their victory dominated economics for nearly a century, did not lack an opposition. All through the period there were men who maintained, though from differing points of view, that economic life could not be divorced from moral considerations,

and that in practice *laisser-faire* meant the oppression of the weak. Such men were SPENCER, OGILVIE, and PAINE; the writers GODWIN, COLERIDGE, SOUTHEY, WORDSWORTH, and THELWALL; the reformers CHARLES HALL, OWEN, RAVENSTONE, and HODGSKIN; with SHELLEY to add the glamour of a great poet. Their story must be told very briefly. The early basis of their thought was the 'Law of Nature' as expounded by Locke and popularized by Rousseau. From this came the theory that in original society all men were free and equal, and next that land was held in common; finally, that labour was the real title to property. When to these theories was added Ricardo's apparent proof that wages and profits must be in inverse ratio, a body of doctrine, anti-capitalistic or SOCIALIST in form, was soon evolved. Its three chief points were: (*a*) private property should be abolished; (*b*) rent, profit, and interest to those who did not labour was a violation of natural law; (*c*) all reform must be in harmony with natural law. But natural law as a basis of life was somewhat discredited by the French Revolution—'Robespierre and Bonaparte destroyed the halo of Rousseau'[1]—and for some twenty years, till 1828, Bentham succeeded Locke as prophet. The new test was happiness, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and happiness they declared impossible under the capitalist system. Before 1817, however, we cannot find anything that we can call a school of thought. William Godwin was an anarchist rather than a communist, 'his ideal being an aggregate of free independent persons, mainly bent on the utmost development of their individuality'.[2] His influence on the Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey group was intense, but not lasting, and these great poets soon lapsed into 'fathers of Tory Democracy and Christian Social Reform'.[3] In 1792 Thomas Hardy, a Scottish shoemaker, founded the LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY, which, in spite of a vain attempt by Pitt in 1794 to convict its leaders of high treason, succeeded

[1] Beer, *History of British Socialism*, vol. i, p. 103.
[2] Ibid., p. 118.
[3] Ibid., p. 122.

for seven years in being a school of social reform for labour leaders all over England. In 1799 the passing of the Traitorous Correspondence Act, which made all communication between political societies illegal, brought it to an end. But its work was done.

The name, however, that stands out above all others, is that of ROBERT OWEN (1771–1858). The son of a Welsh saddler and ironmonger, and apprentice in a drapery shop, at twenty he was manager of one of Manchester's largest factories, then factory owner, and eventually, for over thirty years, partner in one of the largest manufacturing houses in Scotland. After fourteen years' experience he, in 1811, reconstructed his factory at New Lanark, on the basis of making the welfare of the employees the first consideration. He limited the hours, paid good wages, provided schools for the children and decent conditions for all his workers, and found that it paid. Convinced by his experiments, he devoted himself to securing remedies for the terrible industrial conditions, and we have seen his partial success in the Factory Acts. In 1816 came the first great crisis of unemployment due to over-production, and Owen rapidly became convinced that remedial measures were useless and that the whole competitive system of capitalist industry was wrong. His main theories were: (*a*) the object of all human exertion is happiness; (*b*) man's character is made by his environment; once convince people of this and they will willingly set about creating environment that shall produce fine character. Since it was obvious that capitalist industry was creating environments bound to deteriorate man rather than elevate him, capitalism must go. The 1816 crisis showed that production had outrun consumption, high profits made by a thrifty class had increased the amount of capital, while low wages had depressed the purchasing power of the working-class; the problem was to bring consumption to the level of production. Owen arrived at the plan of combining labour and expenditure, i. e. communism. He urged people to form co-operative villages in which labour and consumption should alike be shared, which became known as

'Owen's Parallelograms' from the orderly lay-out of the streets that he proposed. By 1821 his position was that of pure communism, and he bitterly attacked the current political economy on the ground that it supposed the sole object of society was the accumulation of material wealth, and treated man as an inanimate machine whose capacity for suffering, thinking, and enjoying was of no account.

In 1824 he bought up the Rappist Colony in Indiana and altered it to his own model as New Harmony. The 900 others who joined him proved very unsuitable material for such an experiment, and after three years Owen closed it and returned to England, having lost £30,000. At the same time (1824) the London Co-operative Society was founded, and it was in its magazine, which ran from 1826 to 1830, that the name 'Socialist' was coined. In 1831 Owen started his labour exchanges, where members could buy and sell each other's produce by means of labour-time notes, each thing being valued by the time spent on making it. For four months the plan seemed to be succeeding, but misunderstandings with the owner of the premises, removals, and a bitter press campaign against it caused failure, and in the end the exchanges were closed.

The great outburst of Trade Unionism in 1833–4 was largely due to Owen's inspiration, but his aims were not really those of the Trade Union leaders, for he believed that the solution was by co-operation of capital and labour, while the labour leaders were moving steadily towards the belief that the capitalist and the labourer were fundamentally opposed. His quarrels with these men helped probably to bring about the collapse already described.

Laisser-Faire and the Minimum Wage. The effect of the theories of the orthodox political economists is best shown in connexion with the struggle for a legal minimum wage. According to the doctrine of *laisser-faire*, if all restrictions were abolished and capital and labour left free to use unfettered competition, then wages would automatically find their just level and capital its natural reward. If wages in any trade fell too low, then

OWEN'S PLAN.
You see young man we all contribute something to the general stock, I make shoes, another clothes a third brews and a fourth bakes what what can you do thats usefull?
Oh! Sir I was brought up a gentleman
poor young man
Why thats one of the fellows that used to call me suffaron! you won't do
Shes Brother Saith the community wants a Sexton
A MUTUAL LABOUR COMITTEE Sitting for the admission of members.
The poor may do without the rich, combine to supply each other with the necessarys of life, live in perfect equality & have leasure to improve their minds. Owen

From a cartoon by William Heath published in *The Looking Glass*, No. 11, 1831

labourers would transfer their services to some other; if they rose too high, an influx of workers from less-favoured trades would soon bring them down. The great thing was not to interfere. This theory was false, if for no other reason than that it supposed labour to be absolutely fluid, automatically transferring itself immediately to where the pressure was least. Labour never is thus fluid, not even now, one hundred years later; then it was a highly viscous treacle easily crystallizing. Looking back it is easy to see that the one measure which might have stayed the torrent of misery was the fixing by authority of a minimum wage. There were men among the employers who saw this, and the labourers instinctively turned to the law to help them. The law of Elizabeth empowering justices to fix maximum wages, and that of James I to fix lower as well as upper limits, had long been in abeyance, and in 1795 Whitbread introduced a Bill to empower Justices of the Peace to fix wages for agricultural labourers, with penalties for paying less. It was killed by the eloquence of Pitt, who based his opposition on the principles of Adam Smith, and preferred the benevolence of the wealthy to save the labourer from starvation to the interference of Parliament with the operations of supply and demand. In 1800 Whitbread made a second attempt, after Pitt had given up the Poor Law problem in despair, but the opposition was even fiercer, and he failed completely. Pitt talked largely of the importance of labour finding its own level, and a Parliament of landowners eagerly 'disguised under the gold dust of Adam Smith's philosophy'[1] their own rapacity.

From 1805 to 1808 the cotton weavers were agitating for the same thing, and were supported ostensibly by the wealthier masters, but, as we have seen,[2] they failed completely.

That the plan proposed did considerably benefit the workers is shown by the position of the Spitalfields silk-weavers. In 1773 they had secured an Act regulating their wages, and in

[1] Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, p. 119.
[2] See p. 380.

1792 it was extended to cover workers in silk mixtures, and in 1811 to women workers. The opponents of regulation asserted that trade was thereby driven from London, and this was true to a certain extent, but the contrast between themselves and the sweated workers of Coventry and Macclesfield, the rival unregulated centres, convinced the men that the Act was a benefit to them. The Coventry weavers agitated in vain for the same protection. A limited trade under decent conditions proved preferable to both men and masters. For fifty years the Spitalfields weavers remained an aristocracy among workers, but in 1824 the Act was repealed, and at the same moment the prohibition of foreign silks was changed to a 35 per cent. duty, and the silk-weavers soon dropped to the state of other textile workers. In 1840 they tried to get a trade board to regulate their wages, but *laisser-faire* was still the orthodox creed, and 'labour continued to find its own level of starvation'.[1]

One interference with wages the Government did venture on. In 1831 was passed an Act against TRUCK[2] in the textile, mining, and metallurgical industries. For many years it was largely evaded.

Taxation. The story of the taxation of the nation during the period from 1763 to 1834 is significant from two points of view, of great value as warnings for the future. The need for increased revenue raised the whole question of the financial relations of the Colonies to the mother country, and the system of Government borrowings was tried on a portentous scale as a result of the demands of the American and revolutionary wars.

The other point requires more detailed investigation. We have seen that by 1763 it was becoming a difficult matter to find fresh sources of taxation. For a time the sudden expansion in the wealth of the country after 1765 automatically raised the revenue, but the American war cost 97 millions and the revolu-

[1] Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 220.
[2] See p. 129.

tionary wars 831 millions. At three different dates the figures were as follows :

	1775 *Millions.*	1792 *Millions.*	1815 *Millions.*
National Debt	126	237½	860
Annual Debt Charge	4½	9¼	32
Civil Government Cost	1½	2	—
Naval and Military	3¾	6¼	—
Revenue	10	17¼	74½

In 1815 the National Debt reached its highest figure before the Great War ; the population of the British Isles was between 19 and 20 millions, and the debt represented £43 a head. In spite of rising trade and manufactures, high farming and enclosures, to raise nearly 75 millions annually meant taxing almost everything. Pitt indeed had discovered two new sources of revenue ; in 1796 he levied a tax on all legacies of personal property to collaterals, and in 1799 he imposed a general INCOME-TAX of 10 per cent., with certain exemptions. Both of these were to form staple sources of revenue in the nineteenth century and to supersede the hundred and one indirect taxes that strangled men before 1830. A table of the principal taxes in 1815 is below :

Direct Taxes

	Millions.
1. The Land-tax converted to a perpetual rent-charge and redeemable, produced	1⅕
2. Taxes on establishments (window-tax, house duty, carriages, servants, armorial bearings, &c.), produced	6½
3. Income-tax of 10 per cent., produced	14½
4. Taxes on insured property (fire and marine), nearly	1
5. Legacy duties on personal property	1¼
6. On coaches and other means of locomotion, on professions and licences to trade, about	½
7. Tonnage on shipping	17

Indirect Taxes

1. Eatables. Salt, sugar, raisins, currants, pepper	5
2. Drinks. Beer, wine, spirits, tea, coffee	23
3. Tobacco	2
4. Other articles of consumption (coal, building	

	Millions.
materials, ship-building, raw cotton, silk and hemp, soap, glass, candles, paper, newspapers, advertisements, &c.)	10
5. Stamp duties (extended to 'every species of written or printed document necessary for carrying on the business of mankind'), produced	$2\frac{3}{4}$

CARTOON of 1811 in which John Bull endeavours to snuff the flame of Pitt's taxation.

It appears from the above that nearly 63 per cent. of the total taxation was indirect and fell on articles in common use. An estimate in 1833 gives £11 7*s.* 7*d.* as the taxes paid by a labourer out of an income of £22 10*s.* True £4 11*s.* 3*d.* of this is for malt, but even deducting this it amounts to nearly one-third of the income. The following extract from an article by Sydney Smith in 1820 expresses with a somewhat grim humour the state of affairs:

'We can inform Brother Jonathan what are the inevitable consequences of being too fond of glory. Taxes upon every

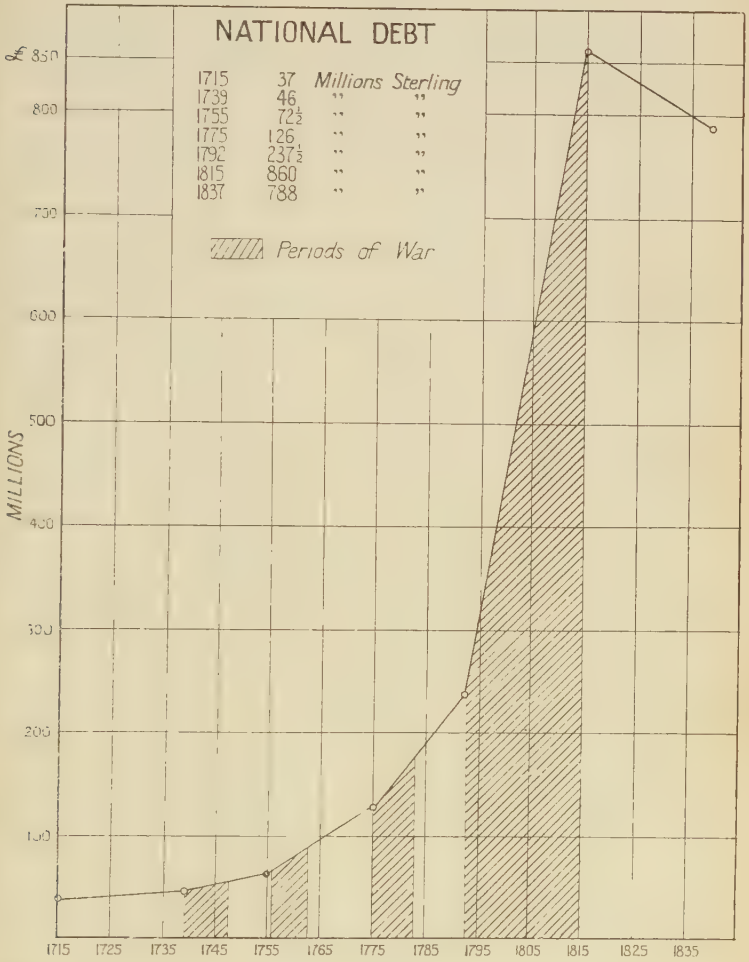
article which enters into the mouth or covers the back or is placed under the foot. Taxes upon everything which it is pleasant to see, hear, feel, smell, or taste. Taxes upon warmth, light, and locomotion. Taxes on everything on earth or under the earth, on everything that comes from abroad or is grown at home. Taxes on the raw material, taxes on every fresh value that is added to it by the industry of man. Taxes on the sauce which pampers man's appetite, and the drug which restores him to health; on the ermine which decorates the judge, and the rope which hangs the criminal; on the poor man's salt and the rich man's spice; on the brass nails of the coffin, and the ribbons of the bride; at bed or board, couchant or levant we must pay. The schoolboy whips his taxed top; the beardless youth manages his taxed horse with a taxed bridle on a taxed road; and the dying Englishman, pouring his medicine which has paid 7 per cent. into a spoon which has paid 15 per cent., flings himself back upon his chintz bed which has paid 22 per cent., and expires in the arms of an apothecary who has paid a licence of £100 for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed from 2 to 10 per cent. . . . His virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble, and he will then be gathered to his fathers to be taxed no more.' [1]

The chief cause of this crushing taxation was, of course, war. But besides the millions poured out in trying to rule people who preferred to rule themselves, or in helping reactionary despots stem the current of liberty from France, there was colossal waste. A million and a half went in absolute sinecures, war contractors profiteered according to their kind and with no check whatever, and above all Pitt adopted a system of paying off debt by borrowing at an even higher rate of interest. That ineptitude alone cost the country 20 millions. So concerned were the more serious economists at the colossal burden of debt that Ricardo, in 1819 and again in 1823, suggested a capital levy to pay it off once and for all.

Summary. 1. Attempts to pass General Enclosure Acts and

[1] Dowell, *History of Taxation*, ii. 250.

to enforce some consideration for the poorer members of the village community failed all through the period, though some



lessening of cost was achieved. The first General Enclosure Act came in 1836.

2. The corn policy of the last two centuries was continued up to 1815, and export and import were controlled by a sliding scale which tended to steady prices, and generally succeeded. But in 1815 the first definitely protective corn law was passed, with the object of keeping up the price of corn. The result was a growing agitation against this exploitation of the consumer in the interest of farmer and landlord.

3. The increase in the severity of the Game Laws was a feature of the time, and added to the burden of the half-starved agricultural labourer.

4. The repeal of the Combination Laws in 1824–5, the work of Francis Place, was the first great step of the new proletariate towards freedom. The old laws that put the control of wages in the hands of the magistrates were repealed in 1813–14; after 1824 the workers began to be free to take measures to control them themselves.

5. The Poor Law and Settlement Law were tinkered with, though not fundamentally altered, but the administration of them became hopelessly confused. By a system of using poor relief to supplement wages the countryside was utterly demoralized; large farmers got their labour at the cost of the rates, and many were practically driven to make themselves paupers in order to live. By the end of the period the custom had spread to the towns.

6. The tyranny of the ruling class was shown in its attitude towards all assemblies of poor folk, whether peaceful or riotous. This was partly due to the lack of any organized police force and the consequent use of soldiers on every occasion. Hence arose incidents like Peterloo and the brutal suppression of Luddite and agricultural rioters. The Penal Code, already drastic, was greatly increased in severity at the end of the eighteenth century; even petty theft could be visited with the death penalty. The use of spies by the Government was general, and most of them seem to have been agents provocateurs.

7. The callousness of the ruling class of the time can be accounted for in several ways. The arrogance of unchecked

No. 4.

JOHN BULL

AND THE

NEW TAXES.

Here are some lines about the times,
That cannot fail to please ye.
And if they don't it can't be helped,
But I don't wish to teaze ye.
Go where you will, by day or night,
The town or country through,
The people cry I wonder what
They ever mean to do.

CHORUS.

The oldest person living now,
Never saw such times before

When Victoria went to Parliament,
The deuce a word she said.
About the state of England,
The Corn Laws or the Bread.
They did expect she'd something say,
Which caused a pretty bother,
And the speech was full of nonsense,
From one end to the other

They are going to raise the mustard,
They are going to tax the gin,
They are going to tax the needles,
And they are going to tax the pins.
They are going to tax the bonnets,
They are going to tax the hats,
And they are going to clap a heavy tax
On pickled eels and sprats,

They are going to tax scissors,
Kettles, tables, spoons and knives,
They're going to tax all donkey drivers
And their blooming wives.
And for to raise some money,
For the wedding of the Queen,
They'll tax old maids and bachelors,
That have turned seventeen.

They'll tax salt fish and parsnips,
They will tax all kitchen stuff,
They will tax the soap and soda,
The potash and the snuff.
They will tax the ladies' bustles,
They will double tax the rum,
And the day before Good Friday,
They will tax the hot cross buns

They will tax the hot cross buns,
The bedsteads and the windows,
They are going to tax the coals and coke,
The chamber pots and cinders.
And they are going to tax the farmer,
And they'll treble tax the hay,
And they are going to make policemen
Live on thirteen pence a day.

They are going to tax the brewers,
They are going to tax the bake r
They are going to tax the grocers
And hre going to hang the quakers

They are going to tax all soldiers,
And are going to drub all sailors
And are going to play the devil,
With the cobblers and the tailors

They will TAX baked potatoes,
And they are going to tax the swipes
They will lay a tax on hot peas soup,
The cowheels and the tripe.

They are going to tax the bacon,
And they are going to tax cheese,
And when the sun begins to shine ,
They will tax the bugs and fleas.

They will tax t he ground we walkon
They will tax the bread and meat,
They are going to tax the blankets
The bolsters and the sheets.

They will lay a tax on every thing,
They keep the tax on corn,
And they will in future tax all children
A week before they are born.

They are going to tax the butter,
They are going to tax the eggs,
And they are going to tax three cock'd hats,
And all the wooden legs.

To tax and starve the nation,
They do cobble up some laws,
And the devil swears he'll tax them all
When they get into his claws.

Sold Wholesale by B. Walker, 98, Westgate, Bradford.

power, since the Revolution had thrown all control, central and local, into the hands of the great territorial magnates, found an excuse, though hardly a justification, in the terror produced by the excesses of the French Revolution. Then the greatness of the new wealth dazzled the eyes of its owners to the misery on which it was built. It was such a very good thing that one must expect to pay some price for it. Lastly, those who had consciences satisfied them with charity. The low state of the religious life of the country contributed its share to the general indifference, and neither of the religious revivals of the time was on lines likely to rouse its followers to the primal duty of loving their neighbours.

8. The political economy of the time was such as to paralyse all effort to ameliorate the condition of the wage-earner. *Laissez-faire*, the iron law of wages, and Malthusianism, all cried together to let things alone or you would make them worse. The ' dismal science ' decreed that things like this were inevitable. The early school of Socialists, with Owen as chief dreamer, denied furiously the assumptions of the orthodox school ; their cry of brotherhood was lost in the whirring of the wheels and the clamour of the mart.

9. Taxation. The whole period under review was a period of war finance. The National Debt was multiplied by 7 in 40 years. Pitt introduced two direct taxes, a legacy duty and an income-tax ; but 63 per cent. of the taxation was indirect, and it fell most heavily on the poorest. Everything in constant use was taxed, and even a labourer earning 10s. a week paid away a third of it in taxes.

PART VII

LAISSER-FAIRE TRIUMPHANT

1. High Farming and Free Trade. 1834–74

Progress of Farming. The period before us can be roughly subdivided into three: from 1834 to 1846, when the Corn Laws were abolished; from 1846 to 1853, a time of transition and stress; and from 1853 to 1870, the 'Golden Age' of English farming. The last four years cover a time of crisis and the entrance on modern times.

The condition of the agricultural industry in 1834 was bad; it had not recovered from the disastrous fall in prices after the close of the Napoleonic wars; the impetus given by those wars had been reversed by the times of peace, and the pendulum had started on its customary swing backwards. It was not that good farming was unknown, but that even twenty years of high prices and prosperity had not been long enough to move the majority of farmers to make the most of the opportunity by introducing fresh methods. A large part of the practice of modern farming was known in 1834 and used by the more enlightened tenants and landlords, but the old ways still did for the majority. This was particularly the case on clay lands and in those large areas of inferior land that war-prices had induced farmers to plough up, and which, with corn below 50s. a quarter and their first fertility exhausted, could no longer be made to pay without large expenditure of capital. There were still many open fields, beasts were badly housed and existed in winter on starvation rations, fat cattle tramped long ways to market and arrived thin; long-legged sheep were still desir-

able in a country of tracks rather than roads ; little land had as yet been drained, ploughs were still clumsy wooden affairs drawn by five horses or six oxen, harrows and rollers still most primitive, the latter often a mere weighted log ; corn and roots were sown broadcast, hoeing was almost entirely neglected, corn threshed, winnowed, and screened by hand. The problem was how to diffuse knowledge of better and more economical methods. From this standpoint the drop in prices was an advantage ; sluggards, who, with wheat over 100s. a quarter, could make money with little work, were weeded out, and the period 1837–46 saw the disappearance of these. With them, too, went the small men with insufficient capital to meet the new needs ; inevitable perhaps, but not an unmixed gain.

Let us look at the improvements made between the beginning and end of our period, for in 1837 the ' age of farming by extension of area had ended, that of farming by intension of capital had begun '.[1] The crying need was for DRAINAGE. The general practice was a system of high ridging by which the rain flowed off the surface into hollows between, and took with it all the richest surface soil. The ridged ground also lost all the values left by the rain in slow percolation through the soil. In 1823 James Smith had drained a small farm in Perthshire by trenches filled with stones and covered over, and in 1831 he published an account of it ; in 1843 Josiah Parkes developed the method and laid down general principles. At the same time John Reade, a gardener, produced a cylindrical clay pipe, and in 1845 Thomas Scragg invented a pipe-making machine. Immediately draining operations spread through the country, and farmers on clay land added many working days to both ends of their season.

IMPLEMENTS naturally underwent some improvement in an age of rapid mechanical change. Varieties of ploughs, light and heavy, and suited to different soils, became common, and iron harrows—scarifiers, grubbers, cultivators, and clod-crushers—came into general use ; corn- and seed-drills that sowed in

[1] Prothero, *English Farming*, p. 361.

INSTRUMENTS OF HUSBANDRY,

&c. &c.

MADE AND SOLD BY

A. STEVENSON,

No. 74,

MARGARET-STREET, CAVENDISH-SQUARE,

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(From the late Mr. WINLAW; *Maker of all his Thraſhing Machines and Ploughs, for Ten Years paſt).*

A Thraſhing Machine worked by Horſes or Water, which will thraſh Thirty Quarters of Wheat in One Day, and other Grain in Proportion, without any previous Preparation of the Straw.

A Hand ditto, worked by Two Men, which will thraſh Thirty Buſhels per Day.

A Winnowing Machine for cleaning Corn, Rice, Graſs, Seeds, &c.

An Engine for cutting Straw, ſo contrived as to bring the Straw regularly forward, without ſtopping the Machine; and will with eaſe, by One Man, cut Thirty Buſhels of Chaff in an Hour.

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Engines for Watering Gardens, and Extinguiſhing Fire.

Syringes for Watering Green-houſe Plants.

Tilting Barrows, with Two Wheels, ſo conſtructed as not to injure the Garden Walks.

Ditto, with a Roller in the place of Wheels.

Field and Garden Rollers, of any Size.

Machines for Slicing Turnips, Carrots, Potatoes, or Cabbages, for Cattle

All Sorts of Ploughs and Harrows.

Cotton Gins, for eradicating the Seeds from Cotton, and other Implements uſed in the Plantations.

Ventilators for drawing Foul Air out from Mines, Priſons, Ships' Holds, &c &c.—with all Kinds of Models for Huſbandry or Mechanics, cheaper than any where elſe in London.

Printed at CRAFT's Office, Wells-Street, Oxford-Street.

straight lines and at an even depth, horse-hoes, haymakers, and horse-rakes appeared. A reaper had been invented in 1826, but hardly came into general use till after 1853, and the same was true of threshing and winnowing machines already invented in the eighteenth century. After 1850 came steam-driven barn machinery which threshed the corn, raised the straw to the loft, winnowed and dressed the grain, divided it according to quality, and delivered it into sacks. Turnip- and chaff-cutters were already known in 1837, and later came machines for pumping, grinding, cake-crushing, bean-splitting, and pulping turnips.

Stock-breeding. The work of the eighteenth-century pioneers was taken up and improved, and the formation of pedigree herds of cattle and sheep became general. Shorthorns, Herefords, and Devons were improved, and new breeds such as Sussex, Ayrshire, and Channel Island were introduced and perfected. In sheep the progress was even more marked, and Lincolns, Oxford Downs, and Shropshires rivalled the Leicesters, Cotswolds, and South Downs of the preceding period.

Agricultural Chemistry. The pride of the new movement was the application of science to agriculture. The problem raised and very largely solved was how to put back most quickly into the soil the fertilizing properties used up by each crop. The pioneer worker was Liebig in Germany, who in 1840 published his *Chemistry in its Applications to Agriculture and Physiology*. Then came the experimental station at Rothamsted, where the varying effects of manures were studied as well as the results on animals of different feeding. Up to 1837 the manures that a farmer could buy, as distinct from what his farmyard produced, were soot, bones, salt, saltpetre, horns and hoofs, shoddy, marl, lime, clay, and chalk. Before 1850 chemistry had added nitrate of soda, superphosphates, muriate of potash, rape-dust, and sulphate of ammonia, while it had found a use for the refuse of London's slaughter-houses by treatment with sulphuric acid. The geologists, too, had introduced the farmer to many mineral phosphates, and an increasing shipping trade brought him quantities of Peruvian guano from across the ocean. The

increased use of manures had also an indirect effect; they conduced to clean farming, since they were too costly to be allowed to encourage weeds or to be washed away on ill-drained ground.

A sign of the move forward was the foundation in 1838 of the ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, which brought together the man of science and the practical farmer. 'For more than 70 years it has been the heart and brain of agriculture.' [1]

Lastly, the coming of the RAILWAYS made transport easier, brought the new inventions quickly to the fields, and carried off to distant markets the produce unspoilt and undeteriorated.

But the progress was not to lack set-backs. From 1846 to 1853 times were bad; landlords and farmers were persuaded that the abolition of the Corn Laws heralded their coming ruin; there was a series of bad seasons in 1848, 1850, 1852, and 1853; there was a big financial crisis due to over-speculation in railways and a series of potato famines. Landlords, convinced that with the Corn Laws must go the high rents of the past, pressed on their tenants every form of improved farming, so that the rents need not drop too much. This, of course, had one good result in that production was largely increased, but where landlords had no spare capital or where estates were encumbered, the burden fell on the farmer, and he had a bad time. The West and Midlands suffered least, the corn areas of the South and East most. Rents were, in fact, kept much too high; they were calculated to be double those of 1770, and though enhanced prices for stock and butter and wool might meet them, corn could not. Consequently much land fell back on the landlords' hands, and the situation had to be faced that only by high farming with large capital could land be made to pay.

By 1853 matters were adjusting themselves, and the next ten years showed unprecedented prosperity. Several causes combined to produce this:

(*a*) The discovery of the goldfields of California increased the world's supply of gold and sent prices up (see p. 183).

[1] Prothero, *English Farming*, p. 359.

(*b*) It was a period of great trade expansion, and consequently of large home markets for agricultural produce.

(*c*) In 1854 war closed down the Russian export of corn.

(*d*) There was a series of good seasons.

The result was that prices remained steadily high up to 1870, particularly for wool, the price of which doubled between 1851 and 1864. Production reached its highest level up to modern times.

The one weak place in the farming of the 'golden age' was dairying. Comparatively little attention was paid to it till after 1874, in spite of the great development of cattle already noticed. This development had been achieved in face of some serious epidemics. Foot-and-mouth disease became common after 1839 and pleuropneumonia after 1840. But in 1865 rinderpest (cattle-plague) wrought such havoc that in the strenuous steps taken to stamp it out[1] the other two diseases were nearly ended as well.

We may note here that high farming brought with it its own problems of tenure and of relations between tenant and landlord. The law assumed that the land and all that was in it belonged to the landlord, and some method had to be found to induce farmers to expend large sums enriching land, when the increased value might have to be left at the end of the lease for the landlord to exploit at will. The question of tenants' improvements became increasingly urgent throughout the period, and was not solved till after 1875.

Completion of Enclosures. We have said that in 1834 there were still many open fields, and we shall find that enclosures continue right up to 1874. In 1836 came the SECOND GENERAL ENCLOSURE ACT, of which the chief provisions were :

(*a*) Two-thirds in number and value of the proprietors of common-fields could appoint commissioners to enclose without a special Act of Parliament.

[1] Over 10,000 cattle were destroyed by Government order in one week in March 1866, in an April week only 4,000, and by the end of June only 338; by December only 8.

(*b*) If seven-eighths of them could agree among themselves they need not even appoint a commission.

(*c*) By agreement among the holders their lots could be consolidated without fencing, thus saving expense and securing some of the advantages of enclosure.

(*d*) In the case of very small proprietors the commissioners were given power to help with the cost of fencing.

In 1844 a COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY on enclosures was held, which reported that there were still two million acres of open fields and eight million of commons and waste. They urged a continuance of the process of enclosure. Next year, 1845, came the THIRD GENERAL ENCLOSURE ACT, which tried to undo, too late, some of the evils of the past scramble.

(*a*) Permanent Commissioners were appointed to take the place of the Parliamentary Committee.

(*b*) Land was to be reserved for recreation in quantities to correspond with the population of the parish.

(*c*) There were to be allotments for the poor.

(*d*) Expenses of enclosing were reduced to one-tenth of what they had been.

The second and third clauses were largely ignored by the Commissioners, and in 1869 a return made to the House of Commons showed that out of 614,804 acres enclosed only 1,742 acres were reserved for recreation and 2,223 for the labouring poor. Even if some three-fifths of the total acreage were waste or unstinted common, the amount was not generous; in 1876 the LAST GENERAL ENCLOSURE ACT ordered more consideration to be shown to the poor, and with that enclosures practically ceased.

We may perhaps look ahead a little and note what enclosures had done to the tenure of the soil of England. In 1887, in a population of some 27,000,000, out of 481,828 occupiers of land only 64,588 persons owned all the land they occupied and 18,991 owned part. The rest were tenants on lease or at will. Look back to Gregory King's 160,000 freeholders among a popula-

tion of $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions, and the revolution wrought is seen to be complete.

Condition of the Agricultural Labourer. It is time to turn to the manual worker and to see how these changes affected his lot and whether he shared in the general prosperity. In the years that followed 1834 the condition of the agricultural labourer was almost as bad as possible, so bad indeed that, but for the opportunities to leave the occupation afforded by the industrial expansion and the work on the railways, it is doubtful whether the new Poor Law could have been administered at all. The result of the Speenhamland system had been to leave a greatly over-populated countryside, most of the inhabitants drawing poor relief in one form or another. Now the fundamental changes introduced by the Poor Law of 1834 (see p. 580) were that no relief should be given to able-bodied men outside the workhouse, and that the parish was no longer under an obligation to find work for the unemployed. What happened? Did the labourers starve or did the farmers raise the wages now the rates were less? Wages did not rise, except in the North and Midlands, where the competition of the industrial towns produced relative scarcity of labour. Hasbach is of opinion that the farmers could not pay a living wage, because either they paid rent on leases based on an expectation of a price of 64*s.* for wheat, whereas it was below 50*s.*, or else, when leases fell in, the landlords, instead of lowering rents, tried to raise them on the ground of lessened rates. On the other hand, there is evidence of somewhat more considerate treatment of men by their employers, who could no longer get 'roundsmen' (see p. 328), and who noted that, while their best workers tended to emigrate, paupers in workhouses cost more to keep than workers outside. But the old and sick were forced into the house, and the exploitation of women and children grew till it became a scandal. For wages, even if they rose a little with rising prices, never reached a level above the fodder basis; they might support the man and a babe or two, the rest of the family must earn their keep. A married man with four children over ten years old was estimated to

double his income by their work. If he earned about £25 per annum, the four children would earn as much. Women's wages were round about 9*d*. a day, and girls' varied from 4*d*. to 6*d*.; boys, who went to work earlier than girls, earned from 2*d*. to 8*d*. a day. There is no doubt that not only did the work of women and children tend to keep a man's wages at the minimum necessary for an unmarried man to live, but it also tended to depress that small sum by its competition. Worst of all, 'a premium was again put upon the labourer's marriage, though his true prospects were a decade or so of hard work and privation, then a possible sufficiency for himself, his wife, and six or eight children for some fifteen or twenty years more; after that at about fifty-five years old with powers beginning to fail, renewed privations; and finally, when he should no longer be able to work, "the house" for himself and his wife, or himself alone as a widower'.[1]

But bad as this exploitation of women and children was, its evils were increased by the particular form it took in the eastern counties. This was known as the GANG SYSTEM. It appears as early as 1826, and seems to have originated in connexion with farms isolated on newly approved waste and drained fens. Not wishing to build cottages and attract labourers to come and acquire a settlement, the farmer fell back on casual labour from a distance. The remaining open villages were full of labourers glad to go anywhere to work, and the custom arose of one man contracting with the farmer to supply a gang of so many workers for so long. The gangs were largely composed of women and children, and they went sometimes daily, often for weeks at a time. In the latter case they slept in barns and outhouses and fed as they could. The system was very profitable to the farmer and landlord, very demoralizing to the workers. The gang-masters were accused of sweating and extortion, but it is possible they made little more out of it than the workers. Later, farmers took to organizing gangs under their own overseers, and here there is plenty of evidence of the worst of those

[1] Hasbach, *History of the Agricultural Labourer*, pp. 229–30.

evils. The system grew till 1867, when it reached the dimensions of a public scandal; an inquiry was made and an Act passed regulating it, known as The Gangs Act, 1868. By this (*a*) no child under eight was to be employed at all; (*b*) no women or girls were to work in a gang with men; (*c*) gang-masters were to be licensed, and if they employed women there must also be a licensed gang-mistress; (*d*) no innkeeper was to have a licence.

A comparison of dates shows that the heyday of production was the time of greatest exploitation, and that very neatness and cleanliness which mark out our English farming from all other were the result of the cheap labour of children and women. As far as the woman was concerned the evil was in the low wages, not in the work itself; except where it took her away from the care of her home, she was probably better off at heavy outdoor labour than working fourteen hours a day at a sweated domestic industry. But for the children it was entire loss. It is doubtful if those under ten years of age earned a sum that covered the wear and tear of boots and clothes, it is certain that it took from them even the meagre opportunities of education then offered.

The effective remedy for the exploitation of children came in 1876 with the triumph of the education movement. In 1870 the first Education Act was passed; it provided an authority and ordered it to establish sufficient schools for boys and girls; in 1873 an Act forbade any child to be employed on the land (except by his own father on his own land) under the age of eight, and not until he had passed the fourth standard, but the minimum number of school attendances required was not great and, provided these were made, a child over eight could still be employed, and all children at harvest time. But in 1876 came the real beginning of the children's emancipation. Elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic was made compulsory for every child, and none under ten were to be employed, except by special permission of the local authority for six weeks in the year. Children over ten could be employed if they had

reached a certain standard or made a minimum number of attendances. It was a curious scheme that cut short the education of clever children at eleven or twelve and kept the dullards at it till fourteen, but the basic idea was a minimum of instruction for all, not the education of each according to his ability. The Act was very imperfect, but it was the first step.

THE PIG AND THE PEASANT[1]

Peasant: 'Ah! I'd like to be cared vor half as well as thee be.'

Such was the condition of the agricultural labourer during the forty years of our period, but we must give special consideration to the terrible condition of the manual worker, both in town and country, during the 'hungry forties', because it forced forward the new policy of Free Trade. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 did little for the rural labourer, for, so far as prices

[1] Punch Cartoon of September 1863, reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.

fell, his wages fell to match, and when prices rose after 1853 and landlords raised rents accordingly, the farmers, to meet the claims made upon them, took to machinery and to an extension of the labour of women and children. Consequently, in spite of emigration, the supply of adult male labour remained in excess of the demand. Under such conditions in a competitive system, none of the increased profits could reach the wage-earner, though always the North and Midlands fared better than the South and East, even as to-day agricultural wages in industrial areas soar far above the pittance of Dorset and Hampshire.

Attempts to better the Labourer's Lot. In 1851 Charles Kingsley flung out to the philanthropists of England the defiance :

> You may tire of the gaol and the workhouse,
> And take to allotments and schools,
> But you've run up a debt that will never
> Be repaid us by penny-club rules ;

Let us see how, at any rate, they tried. First of all they took to Allotments. There had been several attempts before 1834 to mitigate the harshness of the new system to the deserving poor. As early as 1782 an Act allowed the guardians of the poor to enclose up to ten acres for the benefit of the poor, provided they could get the permission of the lord of the manor and the majority of those holding common rights, and in 1819 permission was given to run parish farms for the able-bodied paupers or to let part of the land to poor men. The 1801 Enclosure Act had tried to do something on the same lines. Several great landowners reserved small pieces of land for their labourers, as Cobbett noted with approval in 1821. The Poor Law Inquiry of 1832–4 found that while parish farms were not a success, allotments were. But their extent depended on the goodwill and philanthropy of the landlords, and this dependence is seen in the conditions attached to the holdings, which were often conventional and moral, rather than economic. No work was allowed on Sunday, and absence from church might disqualify the holder ; drunkenness, gambling, and swearing might lead to expulsion.

In 1842 there was a bad industrial crisis; this reacted on prices of food, which fell and agricultural wages followed, to as low in some places as 5*s*. a week. There was unemployment and spasmodic rick-burning. In consequence there were two inquiries held. Their reports, the *Report of the Poor Law Commission on the employment of Women and Children in Agriculture* and the *Report from the Select Committee on the Labouring Poor* (*Allotments of Land*), showed that while allotments existed in every county, they were not universal in a single one; their increase was strongly urged. It was estimated that a quarter of an acre could keep a large family for thirteen weeks and was equal to 2*s*. a week extra wage. The committee thought that the best results were obtained from small pieces of land worked by spade labour in the workmen's spare time, and consequently that allotments should not be too big, should be as near the dwelling-houses as possible, and that the landlord should pay the rates, so that the small man should not have to find the money at inconvenient times. Opposition came chiefly from the farmers, who objected (*a*) that having such a resource to fall back upon the labourer became too independent; (*b*) that he reserved his best efforts for his own land; (*c*) that he would steal the farmer's corn, &c., to feed his own animals; and (*d*) that there wasn't any land to spare, as they, the farmers, needed it all themselves. The village shopkeepers also had their vested interests, for the labourer who could supply himself with a quarter of his food would buy less from them, and innkeepers disliked labourers spending time digging which might be better occupied drinking to their profit. Three attempts to carry out the recommendations of the report by legislation in 1843, 1844, and 1845 failed, though something was secured, as we have seen, in the Enclosure Act of 1845, only to be frustrated by the administration. So the movement was left to the generosity of private men, and up to 1868 considerable progress on these lines was made by great landowners like Lord Shaftesbury, who provided 396 allotments in Dorset, and the Duke of Marlborough, who gave 914 in Oxfordshire. After 1868 there was a falling off, either from lack of

interest on the part of the landlords or possibly because the high rents asked made the holdings of less value. Sometimes as much as five times the sum paid per acre by the farmer was demanded for the small holding. In 1870 there was still much room for development on these lines.

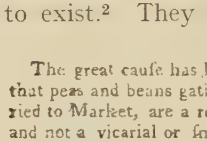
EDUCATION. Until the employment of children was forbidden and attendance at school made compulsory, there was no chance of any improvement. 'High farming' did not need an educated working class; like the factory it asked 'hands', skilled indeed for their special job, but beyond that the less developed the better. We have seen (p. 476) that the experiment of educating the labourer was begun in 1870 in a small way; such results as there were appear in the next generation.

Trade Unions. Since the time of the Dorchester labourers, all hope of bettering their position had died among the rural workers. But in the late sixties things began to stir, public opinion was rousing itself, official reports proclaimed the miserable wages and housing conditions of the rural worker; the Royal Commission of 1867 had closely investigated the conditions of his life, and bit by bit facts crept into the papers that roused sympathy among the middle classes and diffused knowledge among the men themselves. Into the wave of Trade Unionism that came in 1871 in all trades and all parts, the agricultural labourers were swept. In 1872 a few labourers in a village near Leamington wrote an account of their wretched condition to a local newspaper; others met at Wellesbourne, read this letter, and decided to invite the help of Joseph Arch, a labourer who owned a freehold cottage, and who was known in the district as a Primitive Methodist preacher. On February 13, 1872, Arch addressed some 1,000 labourers under a chestnut tree and roused them to form a Union. The next month 200 men struck for a wage of 16*s.* and an eleven-hour working day. The movement spread rapidly through the central and eastern counties; public sympathy was aroused and a Union with 64 branches and 5,000 members was formed. Archibald Forbes, the war correspondent, wrote up the labourers' cause in the *Daily News*, and the NATIONAL

Agricultural Labourers' Union was formed, with Joseph Arch as president. There followed an increase of wages of from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* a week. The Union set out to win a great number of objects; it formed sick benefit clubs and assisted emigration. In one year it spent over £3,000 for this purpose and £2,600 on migrating labourers to the north. The Union leaders had plans, too, for creating peasant proprietors, and hence for agitation against existing land laws, also for the disestablishment of the Church. The latter objects were, no doubt, partly inspired by the bitter hostility that the Unions aroused among landlords, farmers, and clergy. These three classes were still in the state of mind of the manufacturers of forty years before: to form Unions was not merely wanton foolishness, it was a repudiation of that natural and proper subservience due to the masters, whom Providence had placed in control. The rural magistrates stretched the law to its utmost against the labourers, and two clergyman justices sent sixteen labourers' wives to prison with hard labour for 'intimidating' non-Union men. Landlords like the Dukes of Rutland and Marlborough denounced the leaders as disturbers of 'the friendly feeling which used to unite the labourer and his employers', while Dr. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, suggested the horse-pond as a fit place for Union delegates. Army officers, too, intervened and supplied soldiers to reap the farmers' harvests during a strike. After their first defeat, due to the suddenness of the attack, the farmers rallied and opposed to the Unions the full weight of their time-honoured inertia. In 1874 those in Suffolk met a demand for a rise from 13*s.* to 14*s.* a week by a lock-out of Union men, and this was taken up by others till 10,000 men were out of work. The National Union, after distributing £21,000 in strike pay, was defeated, and from this time it rapidly declined. Every winter farmers used the lock-out to break individual branches, and in a few years Arch's great Union had sunk to little more than a number of village sick and burial clubs. The discord between rival Unions had been a factor in the decline. The upheaval had not left the countryside unaltered; thousands had left it

for good, and wages as a whole had risen somewhat. Besides this, farmers had been forced to consider their ways; some had turned to machinery to solve the labour problem; all were looking round for means to better the position for themselves, and the question of tenant-rights began to be considered in earnest.

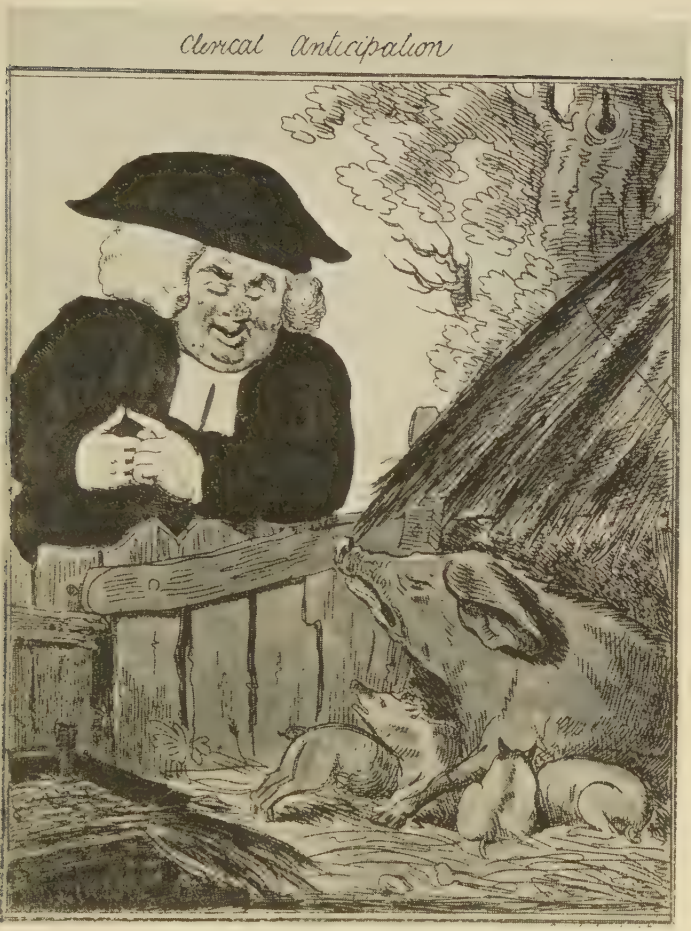
Tithes. There was one factor in rural life that the agricultural revolution brought to the fore as increasingly unsuited to the new conditions. We have spoken of tithes[1] in our account of the mediaeval Church, and we have seen that though the Reformation deprived the Church of a large part of them, they by no means ceased to exist.[2] They had largely passed, along with


The great cauſe has lately been determined that peas and beans gathered green, and carried to Market, are a rectorial or great tythe, and not a vicarial or ſmall one. This is of great conſequence to the landed eſtates about London, where ſuch vaſt quantities are gathered green for the London markets: They are always looked upon as great Tythes in the pariſhes of Fulham, Chiſwick, Ealing, Iſleworth, Twickenham, Kingſton, &c. &c. &c.

THE TITHE IN KIND. Newspaper cutting of the nineties.

the monastic lands, to lay impropriators. It was still possible to exact tithe in kind, though by the end of the eighteenth century it was not common. Its inconveniences were obvious, and the farmer put every obstacle in the way of collection. A Hampshire farmer, having notified the tithe-owner that he was about to draw a field of turnips, and wagons and men having duly arrived to carry the tenth part, he proceeded to pull ten turnips and gave one to the tithing-man, with the remark that he would let his master know when he was drawing again. Besides the obvious inconveniences, such as having to wait till the tithe-owner appeared before beginning to harvest, payment in kind produced constant altercations and litigation; the cost, too, of storage was great, and that of marketing had to be

[1] See p. 160. [2] See p. 444.



THE PARSON AND HIS TITHE-PIG.
Cartoon by Robert Cruikshank

added. Various plans were adopted up to 1836 to avoid the difficulties. In some enclosures land was allotted in place of tithe ; sometimes a fixed corn-rent was substituted. The farmer might buy off the tithe each year at a surveyor's valuation or pay so much in the pound over a period of years. In some parishes the value of the tithe had been fixed for ever a long time before in money value of the time of fixing. Such a plan was unfair to the tithe-owner ; a penny, for example, having long ceased to represent the tenth part of a fleece.

Besides this, the mere existence of the tithe was a drag on agriculture, for while the farmer supplied all the capital sunk in the farm, a tenth of the increased produce had to be paid away. The time was fully ripe for a regulation of the ancient due. In 1836 an Act for the Commutation of Tithes was passed. Its object was to arrange for a charge on all land that should vary from time to time in such a way that according to the cost of living it should have the same actual value as at that date. To fix the sum for ever would leave the tithe-owner at the mercy of decreasing or increasing value of money, so it was determined to make it a corn-rent. The main clauses of the Act were :

(*a*) Within a certain time tithe-owners and tithe-payers of a parish could agree on a total sum to be the present value of the tithe.

(*b*) If they could not agree in the time a local inquiry would be held by the Commissioners and the tithe valued on a basis of seven years' payments.

(*c*) The total net sum so decided was divided into three parts and expressed in terms of the number of bushels of wheat, barley, and oats purchasable for that sum, and henceforth the current value of that number of bushels was the value of the tithe in any year. For every £100 of tithe as valued in 1836 the owner was henceforth to receive each year 94·96 times the average price for the preceding seven years of a bushel of wheat, 168·42 times that of a bushel of barley, and 242·42 times in the case of oats.

(*d*) Payment was transferred from the occupiers to the owners of land. Tithes have thus become a regular known charge on any land, and are duly allowed for in the price of land when it changes hands.

Summary. 1. The period saw the culminating point of agriculture in England. By 1853 the change from open field farming was practically complete, most modern methods were known, and chemistry and engineering rapidly supplied deficiencies. High farming became general, both landlords and farmers prospered, and production, except in dairying, reached its maximum.

2. General Enclosure Acts completed a process that dated from the fifteenth century and reached its climax during the Napoleonic wars. Belated attempts to re-attach the poor to the land failed, owing to lack of public opinion to enforce the law.

3. The condition of the agricultural labourer throughout the period was bad; it was at its worst in the 'hungry forties', and improved but slightly during the farmer's seventeen years of prosperity. In spite of the depopulation of the countryside, the supply of labour continued to exceed the demand, and competition was increased by the exploitation of women and children; the exploitation of the latter was limited towards the end of the period by the Education Acts.

4. The main specific for improving the lot of the agricultural labourer was allotments, but in spite of strong representations in their favour, Parliament steadily refused to give them encouragement, and except for the enlightened efforts of several large landowners, nothing was done.

After 1870 there was a burst of Trade Unionism, which was successful for a short time and then died down. It had, however, effected something, and did not become entirely extinct.

5. In the first years of the period the confusion into which the payment of tithes had sunk was cleared up, and the Commutation of Tithes enforced by Act of Parliament in 1836.

2. Industrial England from the Reform Bill to the Education Acts

We have summed up the period from 1834 to 1875 as '*Laisser-faire* Triumphant', and indeed its main interest lies in its practical exposition of how the doctrine of 'each man for himself and the Devil take the hindmost' works out in the happiness and misery of human beings. By 1841 the first upheaval of mechanical inventions was subsiding, equilibrium between the demands of allied processes had more or less been reached; spinner and weaver and finisher, each had his machinery adequate for the supply of raw material to his fellow; the iron industry was sufficiently advanced to supply the necessary machines, and out of the initial scramble each industry was settling down to the organization and size of business that best suited it. The only battle left was that necessary to remove the last bonds of the old regulation; 'the greatest good to the greatest number' was surely coming, now that 'enlightened self-interest' was getting a real chance to show what it could do.

None the less the story we shall have to tell will read almost exactly the opposite way. For the *laisser-faire* school, though triumphant in the main, and successful in clearing the ground of all the old lumber of a dead age, was not allowed to march on without challenge. This challenge came from two quarters, from the Benthamites and from the humanitarians. That the followers of Jeremy Bentham should be among the reformers seems at first a paradox, but for them the doctrine of *laisser-faire* implied also a doctrine of absolute individual liberty. Consequently, while they objected to all governmental interference with trade and industry, they were also for removing every abuse based on privilege, and reforms such as the Municipalities Act, the abolition of the last traces of monopoly, the repeal of much of the Law of Settlement, and finally the establishment of Free Trade, helped to tip the balance in favour of the unprivileged classes. The Benthamite doctrine that 'every man

is to count for one, and no man for more than one', was a weapon of great power in the war against privilege. 'To the disciples of Bentham *laisser-faire* did not mean, as it did to titled loungers like Lord Melbourne, "let things be, don't worry." It was a war-cry, sounding the attack on every law or social convention which hindered freedom of development. It was a campaign for the overthrow of long-established abuses.'[1]

The other group of reformers was of a very different school. To these men, mostly Tories, whose leader was Lord Shaftesbury, the supreme need seemed to be to stop some of the very obvious evils of the new era. To them the plea that these were incidental and necessary evils essential to the establishment of England's commercial supremacy had no value. Shaftesbury himself carried weight where Owen, whose religious views were most 'unsound', and Oastler, who had been imprisoned for debt, seemed doubtful leaders. A deeply religious man, a pillar of the Evangelical party, a peer of the realm, he might be trusted not to draw the nation into any Jacobin morass, nor to be blinded by dreams of an impossible and most undesirable communism. It was to Shaftesbury we owe the long series of Factory Acts, by which the humaner elements of the nation mitigated the lot of the worker under the régime of capitalist individualism. No doubt the political economists were right and the utilitarians preached the real philosophy, but after all there were exceptions, and Englishmen could be trusted to throw logic to the winds, if their feelings were roused, especially by an earl of unblemished religious and moral fame. There were others, men of the pen, not without influence: Carlyle thundering against a 'gospel of mammonism' and the 'liberty to die by starvation', Elizabeth Barrett voicing the children's cry, and Ruskin reminding a hostile public that 'man does not live by bread alone', and that 'there is no wealth but life'.

Regarding the period as a whole we may describe it as the age of iron, when iron became the chief element in construction and the basis of civilized life. Machinery invaded every depart-

[1] C. R. Fay, *Life and Labour in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 44.

ment, and iron, with its partner coal, became our first consideration. It was this dependence of the new age on iron and coal and the fact that these islands are rich in both, that tempted us to advance beyond a national economy and make a bid for the markets of the world. Railways and steamships made a new world-economy possible, and England was first in the field. The establishment of Free Trade was the definite break with the past; forty years of peace at home, broken only by the far-distant Crimean War, while Germany, France, and Italy were in constant turmoil, gave England not only a start but a practical monopoly throughout the period. Up to 1875 she was the workshop and the mart of the world.

There are, however, two periods of widely different character. The legend of 'the hungry forties' still is told by old men, the last dip of the depression due to the earlier changes. Few eras have been worse than that which ushered in the Victorian Age. The conditions of the time may be judged from the report of an eyewitness in 1842. Of Colne in Lancashire he says: 'I visited 88 dwellings selected at hazard. They were destitute of furniture save old boxes for tables or stools, or even large stones for chairs; the beds were composed of straw and shavings. The food was oatmeal and water for breakfast, flour and water with a little skimmed milk for dinner, oatmeal and water again for a second supply.' He saw children in the market grubbing for the rubbish of roots. Yet 'all the places and persons I visited were scrupulously clean. The children were in rags but not in filth. In no single instance was I asked for relief.' At Burnley he saw the weavers 'haggard with famine, their eyes rolling with that fierce and uneasy expression common to maniacs. "We do not want charity," they said, "but employment." I found them all Chartists.' Of the 9,000 inhabitants of Accrington only 100 were fully employed. Many lived on nettles, some had food only on alternate days, many only one meal a day.'[1]

By 1850 the tide had turned, and the next twenty-five years

[1] Quoted in *Life and Labour in the Nineteenth Century*, C. R. Fay, p. 178.

were years of progress and prosperity. Those who heralded the Golden Age at the Great Exhibition of 1851 were not without their seeming justification. Prices rose, but wages rose too; Free Trade did not even ruin the farmers, England dominated the markets of the world and held its carrying trade. Wars or internal unrest occupied all her rivals.

Special Industries. Cotton and Wool. Between 1834 and 1874 the development in these industries presents nothing striking. The bulk of the machinery had already been invented, and though it was being constantly improved, it did not alter greatly. In the woollen industry hand-work still persisted, hand-combing till after 1840, hand-weaving throughout the period, though the power-loom was general by 1850. In 1838 there were 14,000 hand-loom weavers in Bradford, existing on wages of 6*s*. and 7*s*. a week. It was these poor wages that postponed the introduction of machinery. For spinning an economical self-acting mule had been invented by 1830. It became general for the coarser cotton-yarns between 1850 and 1860; for the finer yarns it was not in use till after the cotton famine of 1862–5. By 1882 hand-mules had nearly disappeared. During this period throstle-spinning decayed, but a variant of the method known as ring-spinning, invented in America, took its place.

There was a big advance in dyeing towards the end of this period, heralding a much greater advance in the next thirty years. In 1858 Perkin made the first synthetic[1] dye; mauve and such dyes, derived chiefly from coal-tar, were rapidly made. This work was especially taken up in Germany, where it was eventually developed with great skill and scientific accuracy.

Coal. The increased use of machinery, the construction of railways and later of steamships, increased the demand for coal at an enormous rate after 1836. Many new pits were opened and fresh districts explored. The South Durham coal-field, so far hardly touched, developed rapidly, and by 1838 it was recognized that the best steam-coal was to be found in South

[1] A dye made by combining chemical substances, not derived from vegetable products as the old dyes were.

Wales. Docks at Cardiff and the laying of the Taff Vale Railway increased the facilities for export.

The history of the trade turns for a large part of the time on the attempt to secure greater safety in working. The Davy lamp won its way slowly and had several set-backs. On the one hand it was expected to do too much, and other precautions, like ventilation, were neglected, while the pits got ever deeper and more dangerous; on the other the men found it difficult to work by, and risked a naked light in order to see better. In 1835 George Stephenson held that Parliament would be justified in so much interference with individual liberty as to compel the adoption of two shafts at least in every mine. The employers thought otherwise. An important committee at South Shields, after a bad accident in 1839, declared that not nearly enough attention was paid to ventilation, and that the dangers of the fiery mines of the north were unduly great. They also recommended that Government inspectors should be appointed; this had already been done on the Continent. In 1844 Faraday drew attention to the dangers of coal-dust; in 1846 and 1847 commissions again recommended inspection. At last in 1850 came the Inspection of Coal-mines Act, which authorized the appointment of inspectors with power to enter the mines and judge of their safety. Correct plans of the mines were to be made, and accidents notified within twenty-four hours. Five inspectors were appointed.

The Commission of 1840–2 that reported on the condition of workers in mines, and by the horrors it disclosed brought about drastic regulation, is dealt with elsewhere (see p. 498).

In 1851 the Royal School of Mines was founded, for the training of those in charge of mines was discovered to be very inadequate. The first trial mining-school in Great Britain was not founded till 1838, and was in Cornwall.

Iron. This period was not only the age of the triumph of iron, but also the birth-time of that of steel. During these forty years iron was gradually used to make an enormous number of things that previously had been made of wood or stone or had

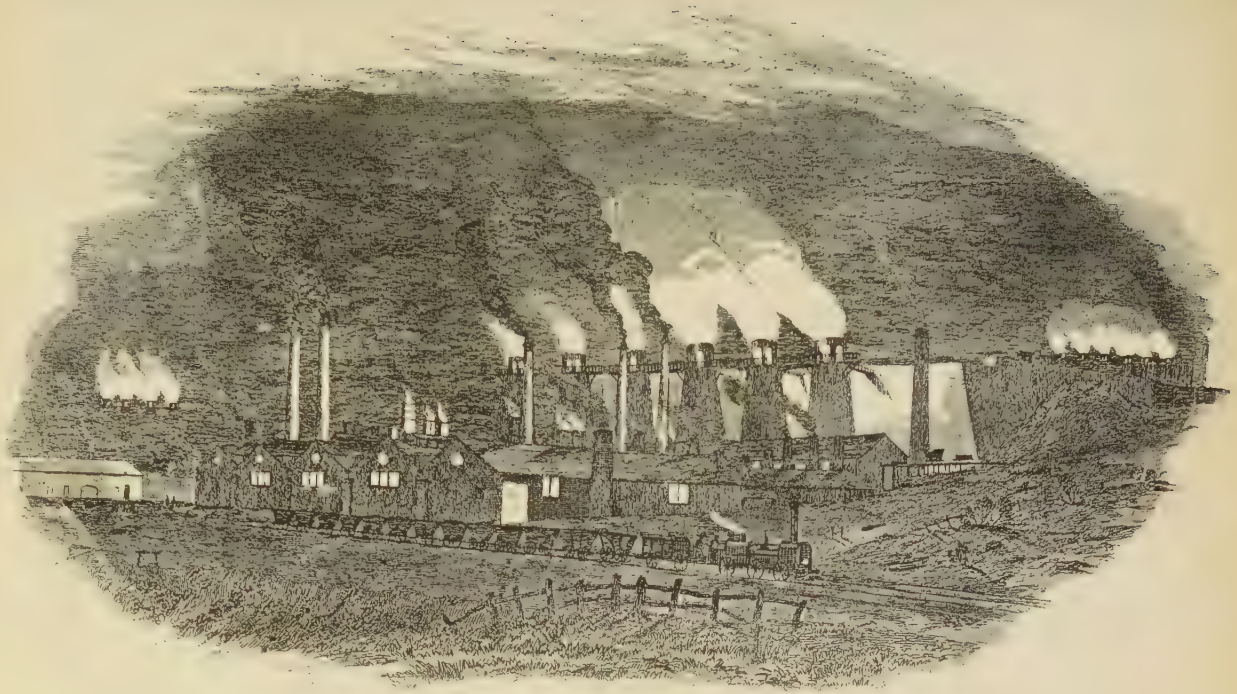
THE COLLIERY OF THE SIXTIES. Arrangements at a Pit Shaft

not existed, and by 1870 the limits of its powers had been reached. But all the time inventors were feeling their way to the production of a steel that should be cheap enough to take the place of iron, since it was stronger and more durable. By the end of it steel was being made which in proportion to the time it lasted was cheap enough to use instead of iron, and during the next period its use made possible engineering feats beyond the dreams of men of the sixties.

In 1840 HEATH added manganese to crucible steel while it was smelting, and so made it easier to weld. Besides this the process made possible the use of British iron, which by the older methods was not pure enough to make the best steel, and iron had been imported for that purpose. Heath's process lowered the cost of the best steel 50 per cent. Again we may note that while the inventor made millions for other people, the manufacturers combined to fight his patents, and after long litigation his widow was cheated out of the royalties.

In 1842 NASMYTH invented the steam hammer, by which the power of working iron was greatly increased. This hammer worked inside a large cylinder, fell by its own weight, and was pushed up again by the pressure of steam admitted below it. In 1845 J. P. BUDD found a use for the waste gases of the furnace in making them fire stoves, which heated the blast and so saved further fuel. About 1850 malleable iron began to be used to make boilers, bridges, rails, buildings, and ships. All this development caused new iron districts to be opened up, such as the Cleveland district in North Yorkshire, Northampton, and Derby. The first had peculiar advantages: Durham coal was at hand, the best in the world for coking, there was much ore, not rich but easily smelted, and the sea was close at hand for export or coasting trade.

The years between 1860 and 1874 saw a great increase in the size of the blast furnaces, till they reached over 100 ft. in height and a capacity of 42,500 cu. ft. In ten years the height nearly doubled, and the capacity was multiplied by six to ten. Also about 1860 the temperature of the hot blast was raised by the



CONSETT IRON WORKS, DURHAM

use of regenerative furnaces. These worked in pairs, and consisted of stoves filled with hot fire-brick through which the blast passed. While one was being used, the other was being heated. The pressure of the blast was also increased.

But the great advance of the time was the invention by Henry Bessemer of his method of making steel. Up to 1856 steel was hardly used except for tools and cutlery, and the best cast steel cost £50 a ton. Bessemer, the son of a French refugee (another of our debts to alien immigrants), was born in 1813, and early made a reputation as an inventor. During the Crimean War he had experimented on guns and projectiles, and received much encouragement from Napoleon III. It was soon evident that more powerful projectiles meant stronger guns, and he started on steel. His central idea was to introduce air into the fluid cast iron, whereupon the combination of the carbon in the iron with the oxygen of the air produced great heat and set the whole mass boiling. He thus got rid of the whole of the carbon and silicon and got soft iron, not steel. Eventually, after many experiments, he secured the right amount of carbon by adding a suitable proportion of spiegeleisen, a cast iron rich in manganese and carbon. But at first strange things happened; Bessemer had described his process at the 1856 meeting of the British Association, and many people immediately tried it and many failed. There was a good deal of excitement, and at last it was discovered that the people who failed were using iron with a lot of phosphorus in it. At first Bessemer tried to deal with the phosphorus, but finding he could get Swedish iron, free from phosphorus, at £7 a ton, he left it alone, and proceeded to improve the mechanical arrangements of his process. Later he found that Cumberland hematite iron was also free from phosphorus, and by 1860, after an expenditure in experiment of £20,000, the process was perfected, and has hardly been altered since. It is pleasant to note that Bessemer, while he made millions for others, was successful in making over a million for himself, and this though France, Belgium, and Germany refused him patent rights.

Steel, being thus brought within the range of practicability, began to be adopted for boiler-plates and rails. For the former its advantage in strength was obvious, but it took the railway companies some time to admit it for rails. By actually laying rails of iron and steel side by side in places of congested traffic and showing that, while iron ones lasted only a few months, steel rails did not need even to be turned after six years, the demonstration seemed sufficiently complete. But by 1880 only two-thirds of the lines of the United Kingdom were of steel, though another fifteen years made its use universal.

Ships had already been made of iron, but a writer on iron in 1864 expresses great doubt [1] as to the possibility of using steel for them, though two barges and one clipper ship had already been constructed. Ships for the navy were made of wood with armour plates outside, hence the term ironclads.

One other process for making steel before 1875 must be noticed. SIEMENS, the inventor of the regenerative furnace, soon adapted it to crucible steel and also to puddling. In 1867 he started making steel in Birmingham, and eventually succeeded in making it direct from pig-iron by a method still in use, and known as the open-hearth process, wherein gas and air, heated in regenerative furnaces, meet and ignite. Lastly, in 1866, Ramsbottam succeeded in making steel tyres without welding, by boring an ingot of steel and then hammering it out.

The enormous increase of iron production is shown by the figures; in 1857 England was producing from 333 blast furnaces 2,700,000 tons of pig-iron, and by 1863 about 3,000,000. At the same date the production of steel was only 40,000 tons.

Coal Gas. One of the greatest helps towards industrial and commercial development was the invention of means for really effective artificial lighting. The Middle Ages went to bed with the sun, and work by artificial light was forbidden, since it was almost certain to be faulty. Under the smoke pall of our industrial towns candles, or even lamps, were certain to prove inadequate, even at noon. But the coming gloom was already provided for.

[1] Fairbairn, *Iron, its History*, &c., p. 314.

In 1792 William Murdoch of Redruth began experimenting with the illuminating power of gases given off by various substances, by 1797 he had been sufficiently successful with that given off by coal to exhibit it, and in 1798 he lighted a workshop in Birmingham by it. In 1801 Lebon, a Frenchman, distilled gas from wood, and in 1803 the Lyceum was lighted by coal gas.

THE TRIUMPH OF GAS. Cartoon of 1811.

In 1810 the Gas Light and Coke Co. secured its Act of Parliament, and by 1814 Westminster streets were lit by gas. Though not destined ' to put out the sun ', it was very soon to ' eclipse the moon ', and the new lighting quickly spread for streets and shops, though more slowly for houses. It developed most rapidly in Scotland, where cannel coal, the most productive of gas, is common.

The burners used up to 1874 were not very good and often

wasted 40 per cent. of possible illuminating power; the usual candle-power of the flat fish-tail flame was about 16, though 20 to 23 was possible. A more powerful flame had been produced in the Argand burner, giving 80–100 candle-power, but the incandescent mantle was still in the future.

Coal gas in 1874 was too expensive for heating purposes, and the manufacture was concerned only with its illuminating power. It was not till towards the end of the century, when the coming of electric light threatened to supersede gas, that the manufacturers turned their attention to the heating powers of the latter, so that its use eventually became general for cooking and frequent for warming rooms.

Factory Legislation. We have seen that in 1833 the first effective attempt to regulate children's work in the factories was made by appointing inspectors to see the law carried out.[1] Four were appointed, and the carrying out of the law was their first object. But their work was even more valuable in another way. They were instructed to make reports, which became quarterly, as to the state of affairs and condition of the people in their district. For the first time the real facts, presented by unbiased civil servants, were at the disposal of the Government. These reports soon showed various difficulties in the way of full administration of the law:

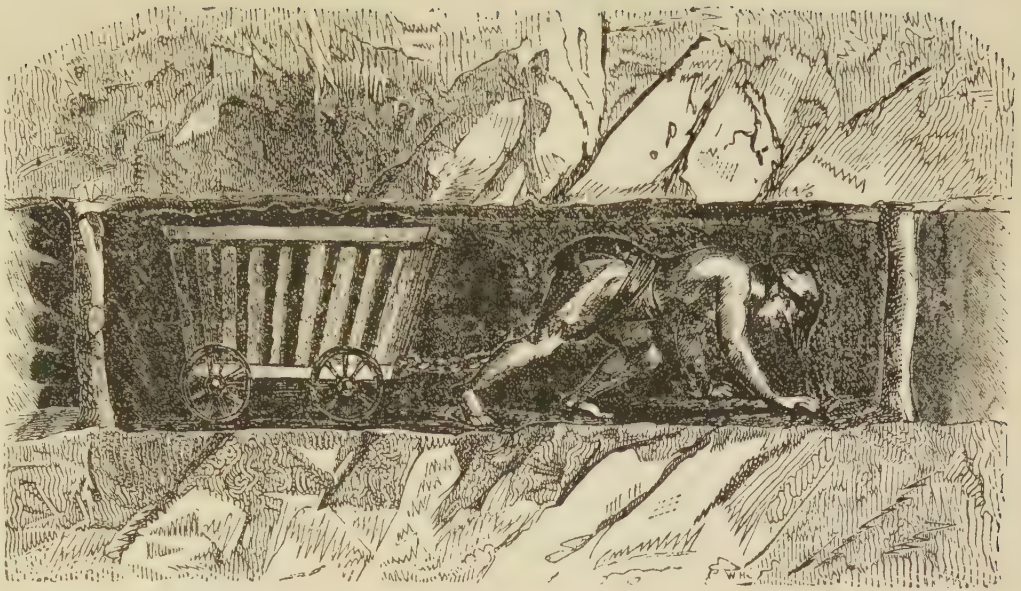
1. There was no means of finding out a child's real age if the parents chose to lie about it. Hence in 1837 REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS was made compulsory. Meanwhile the inspectors had to depend on the competence and honesty of the doctors who certified that the child had the strength and appearance of a normal child of nine. Even when these did not fail, or when the inspectors had secured that certificates should only be accepted from selected doctors, fraud was rife. It was quite possible to send one child to the doctor and a younger one to the factory; there was even sometimes a trade in certificates thus obtained. The rule as to 'young persons' was easier to enforce, because the factory lights betrayed the millowner who kept going over-long hours.

[1] See p. 373.

2. The complicated organization required in order that, while adults and young persons worked twelve hours a day, the children should work only eight, made all sorts of juggling possible. Some owners declined to be bothered with children at all, and the demand for 'piecers' over thirteen increased, and their wages rose from 2*s.* 4*d.* to 4*s.* 8*d.* a week; but as they were paid by the spinners and not by the masters, this only meant a decrease in net earnings to the men. But with children in relays it was impossible to detect evasions. Often the owners claimed that they kept the children eight hours and did without them the other four, a statement impossible to check.

3. The Act ordered that the children should attend school. The inspectors soon discovered that there were very few schools, and that the children could not attend such as existed since the hours of work made it impossible. Schools provided by the millowners were mostly a farce. 'Schoolmasters' who could not read, schools held in the coal-hole with the stoker as teacher in his odd moments, were among the inspectors' discoveries. They soon began to advocate a half-time system invented by some of the better masters, and above all State education. By 1840 the inspectors were in a position to say that, while a large number of mills only worked ten hours, and that in nine-tenths of them the law was kept, it was practically impossible to deal with the remaining defaulters.

In 1842 came the Commission on the Employment of Women and Children in Mines and Collieries. Their report created such horror (the condition of the mines has been already described, see p. 366) that immediate and drastic legislation followed. Thus rigid control of women's work in the mines was set up before anything at all was done for them in factories. It was shown that women worked underground generally in West Yorkshire and North Lancashire, commonly in South Lancashire, Cheshire, and South Wales. The Mines and Collieries Act of 1842 took the enormous step of excluding women and children of both sexes altogether from the mines. Only under the shock produced by the report could so tremendous an interference with



The scandal of the coal-mines revealed by the Report of the Royal Commission, 1842. A half-naked girl drawing a loaded truck

the liberty of the individual have been carried. As it was it had considerable effect on the clauses of the Factory Act of two years later.

In 1844 the work of the inspectors for the past ten years bore its fruit. They had been pointing out that the evils of long hours were not confined to children, and that women were almost as little able to protect themselves. They had also been urging the need for more fencing of machinery where women worked. So the new Act included women in its scope. The principal clauses of the 1844 FACTORY ACT were :

(*a*) Women were included with young persons in the regulations.

(*b*) Machinery was to be guarded in certain specified ways.

(*c*) The half-time system for children was enacted.

(*d*) The age of children employable in factories was lowered to eight.

(*e*) Meal-times for women and young persons were to be at the same fixed hour for all in the factory, and the relay system to be abolished.

(*f*) The power of the magistrates to interfere with the inspectors was taken away, and all regulations in future were to be made by the Secretary of State.

(*g*) Complaints must be heard by two magistrates, neither of whom was a near relative of a factory occupier.

(*h*) Fines for breach of the regulations were increased.

(*i*) A register of the children and young persons working in the factory was to be kept.

(*j*) An abstract of the Act was to be hung up in the factory, with the names and addresses of the inspectors.

The debates on this Act bring out clearly the opposing schools of thought. Those who objected to legislation maintained (1) that all the profit was made in the last hour (one of the inspectors, Mr. Kennedy, pointed out that, on the contrary, owing to fatigue, the last hour was often unprofitable) ; (2) that factory work was light, ' mere confinement, attention, and attendance ' ; (3) that there were worse abuses outside factories.

201.2

IMPROVED CONDITIONS in 1869. Getting out the Ten-yard Coal in the Staffordshire Colliery of Bradley, near Bilston

On the other side Lord Howick formulated the true distinction between State interference to increase the wealth of a particular class or even of the whole nation, and interference to protect the labourer and the community from evils for which there was no other cure.

It is necessary at this point to go back a little and trace a movement which lay behind that for the protection of women and children. What the men workers wanted was a TEN HOURS' DAY. In face of the universal belief of the governing classes in *laisser-faire*, it was useless to hope to secure this by direct attack. The men did not like the eight hours' day for children, for it had no effect on adult time, and they hoped that, if the children's day were made ten, it would automatically result in their own being the same. After 1833, when it became evident that the inspectorate could not secure a complete observance of the law, the operatives agitated for a ten hours' day for all under twenty-one, including children, and a stoppage of machinery at fixed hours, whereby evasion would be impossible. 'Short-time Committees' were formed, and were for a time very active, but the depression after 1836 and the imprisonment of Oastler and Stephens handicapped them. In 1841 the Tories went into office, many of them pledged to legislate for a ten hours' day. The only result of their pledges was to use factory legislation as a retort to Whig Free Traders. In the Act of 1844 Ashley tried to introduce a ten hours' day clause, but failed. At the general election that followed the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the ten hours' men fought on that issue, and in 1847 Fielden passed the TEN HOURS ACT for Women and Young Persons with little opposition. The men had fought successfully 'behind the women's petticoats'. The argument of the 'last hour profit' was dead; trade was so bad that few mills could afford to be open ten hours. At first there was some trouble in enforcing the law. Not till 1848 was trade good enough to make the owners wish to keep overtime, and then they tried to reintroduce the relay system. In the east and south the magistrates supported the inspectors, in the Manchester district they refused, and

Leonard Horner, the inspector, had a bad time between unscrupulous masters who accused him of wanton interference and the better ones who complained that he did not protect them from unfair competition by the law-breakers. The Scottish inspectors refused to carry out the law at all. In 1849 Horner brought a test case, and the judge ruled that the Act did not say what it purported to say. So relays again became legal. The Short-time Committees re-formed, attacked Parliament, and in 1850 an Act was passed FIXING THE HOURS of protected workers between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. or 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., with 1½ hours off for meals, and Saturday work to end at 2 p.m. Thus was established the 'normal day' for women and young persons, and in 1853 this was extended to children, whose hours until then could be spread over the time between 5.30 a.m. and 8.30 p.m.

During the struggle the masters formed an Association to defeat the carrying out of the law as to fencing machinery, which Dickens attacked as the 'Association for the Mangling of Operatives'. Its object was to get rid of the Factory Acts, but though it partly won over fencing, factory legislation went on extending. The calico printing trades came first. In 1843 there were 5,600 children under thirteen in the Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire printing works, and nearly two-thirds of them began under nine. They helped make the colours, saw the cotton was smooth on the machines, laid it in folds and spread colours on a woollen sieve. The hours were long and irregular and there was much night-work. This was regulated in 1845. In 1860 the bleaching and dyeing industry followed. Lace making in factories was partially regulated in 1861. The Commission of 1862 found much sweating in the lace-finishing industry, which was still done in the homes, and they recommended an extension of the Factory Acts to private houses and small workshops.

The Inquiry of 1861–6, in the course of its five years' investigation, brought to light many evils in many trades. In the potteries children of six, seven, and eight were employed under conditions

that made lead poisoning common. Women did 'scouring', which injured the lungs. Some of the manufacturers, e. g. Minton and Wedgwood, memorialized the Home Secretary asking for legislation, and stated that boy labour was a drag on the industry. In the match trade the horrors of phossy-jaw were exposed, and in cartridge-making there was considerable loss of life among the women and girls. In 1864 was passed the First Act which attempted to deal with a home industry. This extended the meaning of 'factory' to 'any place in which people work for hire', and applied this definition and the existing Factory Acts to several new industries. Further investigations showed the same evils in straw-plaiting, where children began at three years of age, and hosiery, where a child of 5½ was reported 'very clever, having been at it (seaming) two years; she used to stand on a stool to see up to the candle'. The Birmingham hardware industry was carried on in places of all sizes from factories to homes, and largely by children; in the clothes trades the same thing appeared, and the worst conditions were in the home industry. Obviously, control must be extended to the small workshop and the home. Here came the Act of 1867. This brought under control a number of new industries, and extended it to any premises in which fifty or more people were employed in *any* manufacturing process, whether specified in the Act or not. Special rules were made for dangerous trades, excluding women or young children from work such as annealing of glass and grinding metals. Ventilation and sanitation were enforced. Unfortunately, much of the good was undone by making a lot of exceptions.

In the same year (1867) the Workshops Regulation Act introduced regulations for places where there were less than fifty workers, unless they had previously been placed under the Factory Act of 1864. 'Employed' was to mean occupied in any handicraft, whether for wages or not. But it did not include the home worker, who took home work from an outside master. Children under eight were not to be employed, and from eight to thirteen only as half-timers. Young persons and women were employable only for twelve hours, less 1½ hours for

meals, and work to end at 2 p.m. on Saturdays. The range of possible hours was, however, larger than in factories, with the usual impossibility of detection of evasion. The control was given to the local authority. This proved to be an impossible policy, at any rate at the moment. Only a few large towns possessed a Medical Officer of Health; the administration of the health clauses was optional, so very few towns took any notice of the Act. Leicester, Nottingham, Leek, and Stafford were laudable exceptions. In 1871 the administration of the Workshop Act was handed over to the factory inspectors. This enormously increased their work, for the number of places to be inspected rose from 30,000 to 110,000, and many were in out-of-the-way places and difficult to hunt out. Even then the inspectors had no power to order bad sanitary conditions to be remedied, except in factories. 'Amid much doubt, uncertainty, and failure in insight and administrative efficiency, society was gradually groping towards the idea that found expression only a few years later: the ultimate end of factory legislation is to prescribe conditions of existence below which population shall not decline.' [1]

In 1874 the last Factory Act of our period reduced hours from 10½ to 10, raised the age of admission to 9 and a year later to 10, and implicitly forbade overtime.

It is obvious that a great advance had been made in forty years. That there was still plenty to do was shown by the Truck Commission of 1871–2. Though truck had all but disappeared from the textile districts, there were parts where it was still rife. In Prescot, watchmakers in 1871 were being paid in watches, which passed from hand to hand at ever decreasing value till they reached the pawnshop. Among the navvies who built the railways, some sort of truck was inevitable in days before Government or philanthropic canteens were thought of, but as carried out it was pure exploitation of a very helpless class. The real home of truck was South Staffordshire and the Black Country, and Bilston housewives pawned flour from the truck shop to pay their rent; it took most of the forty years

[1] Hutchins and Harrison, *A History of Factory Legislation*, p. 172.

after the Act of 1831 to dislodge the evil, and it still survived in 1871 among the nailers and the mining butties. In South Wales, too, it was universal; there the system of monthly pays gave it its power, credit from the truck shop being essential. The Miners' Unions were constantly urging payment each week. To show how the Truck Acts were evaded, read the story of a Dudley nail-maker as told to the Commissioners of 1871. From his home workshop, a hovel with a smithy, he goes on Monday morning to buy his metal from the 'fogger'. His metal is probably the wrong kind, and he changes it at a metal-changer's (a probable relative of the fogger) at the cost of 2*d.* per 10*d.* bundle. At the end of the week he takes back the finished nails and gets 12*s.*, which he spends at a shop near by and gets for it a selection of very bad groceries. The shop is the property of the fogger. Why does the nail-maker go there? Because if he didn't he'd get no work next week. The fogger turns over his money and his profits several times in the course of the day, and the nail-maker gets even less than the meagre earnings he has bargained for. Truck Acts are easy to evade, and it was Trade Unions rather than Parliament that made the law a reality. A recent writer has well said: 'In the nineteenth century the Trade Unions and the Trade Unions alone made the nominal earnings of the working man a cash reality.'[1]

Growth of Trade Unions. In considering the development of combination among the workers during these forty years, it is possible to distinguish four periods, each having its characteristic:

(*a*) 1834–43. We left the Trade Unions in 1834, after a remarkable outburst of energy, beaten, depressed, and diminishing. The nine years that followed were equally depressing. Revolutionary action was dead, though the dreams of Owen and the Socialists still survived. The effect of these dreams was shown by an arrogance on both sides that is now difficult to understand. On the one hand the employers, still terrified by the thought of revolution and outraged by the, to them, preposterous

[1] C. R. Fay, *Life and Labour in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 197.

claims to equality put forward by the extremer thought, asserted a counter-claim to the absolute control of their workpeople, to the point of demanding abject submission. Lord Londonderry gave peremptory orders to the traders of 'his town of Seaham' to cease to give credit to the miners on strike 'against their proprietors and masters'. Consciously or unconsciously the claim was made that capital should own the labourer. On the other hand the workers, still fired by the dream of an immediate and instantaneous change to a state when all men should be equal, grouped into voluntary associations of producers enjoying 'the whole product of their labour', took a tone of hauteur and contempt that was only not ridiculous because of the tragedy beneath. This bumptiousness of expression rather than any real fact was the cause of the early tirades against 'the tyranny of the Unions', and even this audacity was confined to occasional outbursts. The Unions were indeed far from being able to exercise as yet such 'tyranny' as would even make them blackleg-proof.

TRADE UNION CARD OF THE CURRIERS

With the exception of the great strike of the Glasgow cotton spinners in 1838 and the trial of its five leaders for conspiracy, intimidation, and murder, the years from 1837 to 1840 showed a steady decline in Trade Union activity. An attempt by

O'Connell to use the irregularities of the Glasgow Unions to discredit the whole movement and secure its repression failed, but the interest of the manual workers gradually turned from industrial to political action, and the Chartist propaganda [1] absorbed most of their energies. The Trade Unions, such as survived, did not directly take part in the agitation, though occasionally an angry strike would be turned into an attempt at rebellion through the influence of ' physical force ' Chartists. It was the time of the ' hungry forties ', and sullen despair or violent rebellion seemed the only alternatives.

(*b*) 1843–69. During these years the foundations of real Trade Unionism were laid. The leaders, better educated and more practical, began to build by limiting their activities. They concentrated on working for the removal of their chief legal and industrial disabilities. Above all they set out to study the facts and the forces they were up against. They realized that no recognition was yet possible for the claim to equality or of the right of labour to be a first charge on industry. They adopted middle-class economics and were more intent on establishing their respectability than their power. It was a very necessary schooling, and, though it left behind some disadvantages, yet when the years of prosperity came after 1850 the men and their leaders were ready to use them. The chief changes may be summarized as follows :

1. *The movement to get knowledge.* Libraries were formed and classes for mutual instruction ; trade journals were issued by the potters in 1843, by the machine-makers soon after, and by the bookbinders in 1850. In the same year the flint-glass makers issued the first number of their magazine, which is still in existence. According to the Commissioners of 1850 a translation of Plato's *Republic* was much read among the Northumbrian miners, ' principally for the socialism it contains ', ignorant, the Commissioners suppose, of Plato's later modifications and Aristotle's destructive criticism. Perhaps the miners, like some others, preferred Plato in his prime to Plato in his old age, and did not rate Aristotle's economics very highly.

[1] See p. 564.

2. *The growth of paid officials.* This was due to the more permanent character of the new Unions and their concerns as Friendly Societies. The business became too large for men to carry out in their spare time, and officials on full-time salaries became essential.

3. *A strong tendency to discourage strikes*, especially at the will of local branches. These abortive small strikes drained the funds of the societies and effected nothing.

4. *A sustained resistance to legal oppression.* W. P. Roberts, a solicitor, first employed by the Northumberland and Durham miners, became the salaried legal adviser of the Unions and fought their cases up and down the country. It became much more difficult for ignorant magistrates to put their own wishes or ideas in place of the law. Even when a case was hopeless, it paid the workers to put up a fight, if only to show up the injustices of the legal code.

The years 1843–7 saw the foundation of a number of new Unions or revivals of old ones. The potters, the cotton spinners, the printers, the flint-glass makers, all formed permanent associations. The most important was the Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ireland, formed in 1841. This was a federation of two strong county associations, and, under the leadership of Martin Jude, by 1844 it represented nearly all the mining districts of Great Britain and claimed a membership of 100,000. It was this association that fought the miners' strike of 1844, and was practically ruined by it. In 1845 a National Association of Trade Unions was formed, which lasted fifteen years, though its period of real activity was about six. It was not quite a national Trades Union, such as was attempted in 1830–4, and lacked the concentration of the later Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress. It helped largely in winning the Ten Hours Act of 1847, but, like all the earlier attempts at national organization, it was ruined by having to support sectional strikes that it had not authorized.

The new type of Union really made its appearance with the formation of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in 1851. The development in machinery had brought into exis-

ience a new class of worker which rapidly divided into sub-classes as each process became more technical. These sub-classes formed in each district numerous small Friendly Societies, the iron-founders alone having a national organization. After 1836 there came talk of amalgamation, and in 1848 William Newton, a leading member of the Journeymen Steam-Engine and Machine Makers and Millwrights' Friendly Society, set about amalgamating the London societies. He was not a full-time official, had lost his job as foreman, owing to his Trade Union activities, and had opened a public-house. In 1848 William Allan became general secretary of the society, which was the largest and most wealthy trade society of the time. He and Newton worked together to win over the smaller societies, and in March 1850 the Lancashire societies called a meeting, at which they carried their scheme in outline. Six months later, at another meeting in Birmingham, the scheme was definitely adopted. With the utmost skill Newton and Allan persuaded the smaller societies that they were coming in as equals, while the new society took over the constitution and scheme of benefits of the original Journeymen Society referred to above. It added a sick benefit and emigration benefit, together with a definite trade policy of restricting overtime and preventing piece-work; it created district committees and established a new scale of strike pay of 15*s.* a week. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Machinists, Smiths, Millwrights, and Pattern Makers started in 1851 with 5,000 members, and for a few months its success was uncertain. One whole society, the Society of Steam-Engine Makers, did not come in till 1919. But by October 1851 the success of the Amalgamated Society was assured; it had 11,000 members paying a weekly 1*s.* subscription, and seriously alarmed the employers. It secured the end of overtime and of the employment of unskilled men in Oldham, and even when a general demand for the abolition of piece-work and of systematic overtime was met by a general lock-out and the owners won, owing to the unorganized condition of the labourers, the new society stood the shock and emerged neither bankrupt nor shaken. The men adopted new tactics: the owners 'presented the docu-

ment ',[1] the men signed and—remained members of the Union. They claimed that a pledge given under duress was no pledge.

The A.S.E. was to be the ' new model ' for other societies, and its chief characteristics were :

1. It was an exclusive society of skilled workers.
2. Its combination of trade policy and friendly benefits gave it large reserve funds and consequent stability.
3. The branches were nominally autonomous as far as the friendly benefits were concerned, but they were required to work within strict rules which could not easily be altered.
4. All trade policy, including strike pay, was entirely in the hands of the central executive.

It is obvious that the control was strong. At the end of the year the reserve funds were equalized among the branches, by leaving them so much per member each. One other characteristic marked a new departure, a policy of publicity as against the old secrecy. By 1861 the A.S.E. had doubled its members and accumulated £73,398.

From 1850 the prosperity of the times allowed the Trade Unions to develop peacefully along the new lines. In 1853 the present Lancashire Cotton Spinners' Association began its career, and the cotton weavers secured the ' Blackburn List ' of piece-work rates that regulated their wages. The cotton workers' associations were purely trade organizations, without friendly benefits.

At the end of the fifties came the falling off of trade, and strikes became frequent. The builders' strike of 1859-60 called out the full force of the movement. The men had asked for a nine-hours' day. One firm, Messrs. Trollope, dismissed one of the men who presented the request, and the other workers for the firm struck. The masters replied by a general lock-out throughout London. Evidently they were still of the mind of 1830, for they refused to meet the Union and presented the ' document '. The result was to call into the fight the organized

[1] See p. 380.

workers of the country, and £23,000 was subscribed by the other Unions. The battle was eventually drawn: the masters withdrew the 'document', the hours remained the same. The carpenters, however, had learnt a lesson, and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters was the result. It began in 1860, and in 1862 elected Robert Applegarth its general secretary; in a few years its position was second to that of the engineers.

(*c*) 1860–71. The activities of these years centre round a remarkable group of men, officials of the larger societies, who so completely dominated the workers' world that they have been called the JUNTA. They were William Allan, whom we have already met, an Ulster Scot, methodical and cautious even to red-tape and miserliness, but the backbone of the organization; Robert Applegarth (still alive in 1924), a Yorkshireman with a lawyer's brain, who was the conciliatory leader disarming prejudices, a great believer in education, and the acknowledged representative of labour in the political world; Daniel Guile and Edwin Coulson, men of considerable business capacity; and George Odger, a Cornishman with the gift of the orator. Their policy combined extreme caution in trade matters with energetic action for political reforms. They had little faith in the power of the Unions to affect wages as a whole, they worked to keep the standard of all up to the level that the best masters conceded voluntarily. Their main attention was given to the levelling down of political privileges and the opening up of educational and social advantages to all. They worked for extension of the franchise, amendment of the law of master and servant, regulation of mines, national education, and the full legalization of Trade Unions.

'They accepted, with perfect good faith, the economic Individualism of their middle-class opponents, and claimed only that freedom to combine which the more enlightened of that class were willing to concede them. Their genuine if somewhat restrained enthusiasm for political and industrial freedom gave them a persistency and determination that no check could discourage. Their understanding of the middle-class point of view, and their appreciation of the practical difficulties of the situation, saved them from being mere demagogues. For the

next ten years, when it was all-important to obtain a legal status for trade societies and to obliterate the unfortunate impression created by the Sheffield outrages, their qualities exactly suited the emergency. The possession of good manners, though it may seem a trivial detail, was not the least of their advantages. To perfect self-respect and integrity they added correctness of expression, habits of personal propriety, and a remarkable freedom from all that savoured of the tap-room. In Allan and Applegarth, Guile, Coulson, and Odger, the traducers of Trade Unionism found themselves confronted with a combination of high personal character, exceptional business capacity, and a large share of that official decorum which the English middle class find so impressive.' [1]

Another outcome of the builders' strike was the formation of TRADES COUNCILS. These are bodies in each great town representing all the organized trades of the town. The London Trades Council of this time was successful in preventing the use of soldiers as blacklegs and took an active part in the agitation for an extended franchise. (In 1867 the town artisan secured the vote.)

Our attention is next called to the agitation against the law of master and servant. In 1860 the position was this:

(*a*) If a master broke a contract he was liable to be summoned for damages; if an employee broke his, he could be arrested on a warrant for a criminal offence and imprisoned.

(*b*) As a consequence it followed that a master could give evidence on his own behalf, the employee could not.

(*c*) A single justice could issue the warrant.

(*d*) The man had no right of appeal.

That these laws, relics of old statutes, were not dead is shown by as many as 10,339 cases of breach of contract brought into the courts in one year. An agitation started in 1864 secured a Select Committee to inquire in 1866, and in 1867 the MASTER AND SERVANT ACT removed the worst injustices.

At the same time there was a strong middle-class movement to get rid of Trade Unionism. The masters took to sympathetic

[1] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, pp. 239–40.

lock-outs of the whole trade, and there was some talk of ending the Unions by law. Their case was strengthened by a series of outrages among the Sheffield grinders, and a cry for full investigation arose. The Trade Unions joined in the demand, and in 1867 a ROYAL COMMISSION was appointed. It is necessary at this point to explain the legal position of the Trade Unions. After 1825 they were no longer illegal, but they had no status, and could not take action as corporate bodies, e. g. they could not protect their funds from fraud. In 1855 they had secured a clause in the Friendly Societies Act that appeared to enable Trade Unions to register informally as Friendly Societies, and then call on the magistrates to settle disputes between them and their members. This seemed to protect them against defaulting officials. In 1867 a decision of the courts denied this, and the judges went farther by pronouncing that, though not criminal since 1825, they were so far 'contrary to public policy' as to be illegal under Common Law. Here were the Unions back again in the old position, at the mercy of the employers and of the dishonesty of their own servants. It was all-important first to convince the Commission that the Unions were highly respectable bodies of great public value, and then to secure their status by legislation. The Junta were fortunate in adding to their own abilities those of a group of middle-class men, Frederic Harrison, E. S. Beesley, Tom Hughes (of *Tom Brown's School Days*), Henry Crompton, and others. With their help they secured the presence on the Royal Commission, not of a working man—that was unthinkable—but of Frederic Harrison, as their nominee. They succeeded in bringing out the fact that the larger Unions at any rate were opposed to all violence, were primarily insurance societies, and had for trade policy merely the building up of such financial reserves as would enable the men to set a reserve price on their labour. The employers succeeded in showing that some Unions, notably the builders', did restrict output, apprentices, &c., but they foolishly took up an out-of-date position of objecting to all combination. They also concentrated their attack on the big Unions, where

The Collier Lad's

LAMENT!

Printed by WM. PRATT, 82, Digbeth, Birmingham.—Th Cheapest Song Warehouse in England.

IN taking of my walks on a cold winter's day,
As through the Collier's country I wended my way,
I overheard a Collier Lad most bitterly he cried,
O how I rue the day that my poor father died

My father he worked in those pits here hard by,
When he did get good wages we had no need to cry,
But now the case is altered, the want of bread we know
And soon unto the workhouse we shall be forced to go.

Myself and my poor brother in the morning we did go,
To work upon the coal-pit's bank all in the frost and snow,
The little that we both do earn is needless for to tell,
I will scarcely serve the one of us, the masters pay so well.

When my father he was living no tommy-shops were there,
He did receive good wages, and all things went on fair,
And when on Saturday he come home, he to my mother said,
Come let us go up into the town and buy our children bread.

But now the masters have the power to do just as they please,
And the Colliers he must labour hard, whilst they sit at home at ease,
And when their labour it is done the master thus will say,
You will not get your full amount of wages paid to-day.

Five and sixpence for a good day's work it was a Collier's due,
But now he thinks himself well off if he gets more than two,
And if he grumbles at the price the master thus will say
Go the workhouse with your children, and there get better pay.

The masters reap the benefit of all the Colliers do,
By forcing from them much more than what's their due
He does not think how they can live, and little does he care,
As long as all his work is done, they may live on the air.

To the tommy-shop they are forced to go for all that they do eat,
They are forced to take their wages out in bread and cheese and meat,
And when on Saturday they do go their wages to get paid,
The master says the tommy do not forget to-day.

If the Queen and all her Ministers they all were forto come,
To live as these poor Colliers do, & work underground,
And undergo the hardships and dangers of the fire,
I think they'd make the Masters pay them better for their hire.

If Johnny Russell he was here and work'd upon the bank,
And Albert he was doggy, 'cause he's of higher rank,
I think one week would settle them, and cause them thus to say,
Let these poor Collier's have their rights, and give them better pay.

But when I do grow up a man if they don't better pay,
I'll go and be a soldier for thirteen-pence a day,
Before I'll work in those dark pits, and others for to share
The benefit of what I earn in tommy shops and beer.

But if any one's offended at what I now have said,
I only ask to give me work that I may earn my bread,
And pay us well when we have done, and then you soon shall see
We do not sit at home and pine, in want and misery.

A BROADSIDE OF THE 'HUNGRY FORTIES'

it could be met, and not on the smaller and more aggressive ones, where defence would have been more difficult. A synchronous inquiry into the Sheffield outrages showed that some of the Unions were involved, but that violence was not general among the organized labourers of the country. The Commission reported inconclusively, but the minority report by Harrison, Hughes, and the Earl of Lichfield put the case for the Unions very clearly.

Meanwhile the artisan got his vote and proceeded to use it, and the Government after three years' pressure produced in 1871 a Bill legalizing Trade Unions, securing their funds, and at the same time protecting them from harassing attacks from outside by exempting them from liability to be sued in the courts. But they added a clause that practically abolished the industrial power of the Unions, by making illegal the mildest attempt to induce a man to leave his job. He might strike, but if he attempted the only means by which a strike could succeed, he would run foul of the law. The Junta set out to meet this new attack by organizing a great Trade Union Congress, which met while the Bill was before the House. In spite of very great efforts all they could win was a separation of the two parts of the Bill, and while the TRADE UNION ACT made them legal bodies, the CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT made all useful activity a crime. That the law was no dead letter was shown in the same year, when seven women were sent to prison for saying 'Bah!' to a blackleg, and meanwhile the employers freely used black-lists and character notes.

(*d*) 1871–5. This was one of the great periods of expansion in the Trade Union movement. Let us first follow up the political side to its triumph. In 1874 the Liberal Government was routed and a Conservative took its place, more or less pledged to repeal the obnoxious Act of 1871. What was more, the first two working-class members, Thomas Burt and Alexander Macdonald, entered the House. In 1875, after some pressure, the Government fulfilled their pledges, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1871 was unconditionally repealed. The Conspiracy and

Protection of Property Act set limits to the application of the conspiracy law to trade disputes, and the Master and Servant Act was replaced by an Employers and Workmen's Act. By this both became parties to a civil contract, imprisonment for breach of it was abolished, and peaceful picketing definitely allowed. Lastly, no act by a group was punishable henceforth, unless the same act by an individual could be penalized. By this great victory labour stood at length upright in a modern world, the last legal chains of the villein were broken.

The victory had of course its price. The absorption of the leaders of the great societies in the all-important political battle, coupled with the enormous work of their great insurance schemes, left them no time for a forward industrial policy, and these big associations practically ceased to function on that side. Their adoption of the middle-class economics and outlook tended to make them less aggressive, and was besides to land them in the awkward inconsistency of basing their claims on the liberty of the worker to combine, while they were not prepared really, and their followers were still less so, to allow, if they could help it, the 'liberty' of the workman to stand out of the workers' Unions. As a result the forward industrial policy was taken up by other trades, and the centre of Trade Unionism shifted out of London to the North and Midlands, though not to one special city. The concentration of the last fifteen years was split, and sectional interests tended to predominate. For the miners and the cotton operatives were again coming to the fore. From 1856 to 1863 Alexander Macdonald had worked to establish a National Miners' Union. Their aims were (*a*) an eight hours' day, (*b*) the appointment of check-weighers to see the miner was not cheated of his earnings. In 1860 they secured the second by a Mines Regulation Act, and though the masters evaded it, another Act in 1872 strengthened the position of the miners, and eventually in 1887 it was secured. In the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress of 1871 Macdonald was chairman. The cotton workers had also secured progress; they had won the battle of the piece-work rates, and then set

out to secure a fifty-four hours' week, an advance on the Ten Hours' Act of 1847 [1]; in 1875 they gained one of 56½, nominally for women and children, actually for all.

We must notice the difference between these societies and those of the engineers and carpenters. (1) The former had no benefit funds; (2) they were organized in strong federated branches and with no central funds; (3) they produced a special class of official, trained men versed in the technicalities of the trade, masters of all the details of wage adjustments; (4) their first concern was the raising of the standard of life of their members.

These industrial and parliamentary successes produced great elation, and there was an immediate expansion. The story of the agricultural labourers has been told,[2] the engineers secured a fifty-four hours' week, the shipbuilders fifty-one. In 1872 the Trade Union Congress had represented 375,000 workers, in 1874 it stood for a million. In alarm the employers formed, in 1873, a National Federation of Associated Employers of Labour. Another development was the creation of Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration all over the country. But again progress was bought at a price, and this time a heavy one. Many of the men's leaders, in their efforts to convince the employers, came to adopt the capitalist view that wages should depend on prices, and accepted sliding-scales based on this axiom. Some saw the danger, and urged that there should be a minimum, below which wages should not fall, and when the era of prosperity ended, and in 1875 came bad trade and low prices, it was seen that they were right, while those who had accepted sliding-scales had given away a point of the greatest strategic importance in the battle to maintain a decent standard of life for the workers.

The Evolution of Capitalism. During these forty years there was a steady increase in the size of businesses and the amount of capital required in them, but the rate of advance differed greatly in different industries. On the whole it is true that industries to which machinery can be applied are most economic-

[1] See p. 502. [2] See p. 480

ally run on a large scale. During these forty years we find a rapid increase in the size of business, in the amount of capital involved, and of labour employed in cotton, machine making, and in iron-works. In cotton between 1856 and 1885, while the output doubled, the number of factories did not rise 20 per cent., but their average size rose 50 per cent. The wool industry did not so easily adjust itself, as we have seen, and we are nearly at 1860 before the power-loom is predominant, and even to-day a certain amount of hand-weaving survives. Steam-power was used in the lace trade after 1840, but the machinery is delicate and complex, and needs much skilled labour. Frame-knitting became a factory trade about 1860. In these the concentration of capital in large units proceeded more slowly. In the Sheffield cutlery, in agricultural, and in some mining districts the concentration was still slower. In mining, while the Northumberland and Durham collieries were in the hands of large capitalists or of companies, those of Lancashire and Staffordshire were on a small scale, worked by men with little capital. Capitalism in the nineteenth century meant direct employment, steam-power, and large-scale industry; none of these was universal before 1870.

Another aspect of modern capitalism was only slowly appearing. Joint-stock enterprises with salaried directors and managers were few before 1844, and until the legalization of Limited Liability in 1855 could not develop. The typical business unit of the time was one managed and owned by a single man or small group of men, who supplied both the capital to start it and the brains to run it. Capitalist and entrepreneur were one. It is important to realize this, because it accounts for the conviction of the time that the capitalist was the fulcrum on which the whole thing turned. The early and mid-Victorian, when he talked of the owner of capital, did not mean the man who bought shares in a business over whose management he had no control, and who had no connexion with it beyond drawing his dividends. After 1855 such people began to increase in number, but they were neither typical nor numerous. There was still a human

tie between master and worker, even when it was one of tyrant and slave—the wage-earner was not yet faced to any extent by an inanimate abstraction, 'the claim of the shareholders'.

During the period the amount of capital required in any business in proportion to the labour employed also increased, and more of this capital went into fixed machinery and buildings. In the early part of the century, as we have seen, it was fairly easy for a man with a few hundred pounds to start in a small way and become rich. As the years went on this became increasingly difficult. The consequence was the formation of a permanent proletariate, with little hope of rising above wage-earning. In each decade the gulf between capitalist and wage-earner gets wider.

Co-operation. It is necessary at once to make a clear distinction between co-operative production and co-operative distribution. In the former the members band together into a workshop or factory and combine to produce goods, the profits on the sale being distributed among the workers; thus capitalist and worker are one. In the latter the members merely combine to supply themselves with their current needs of food, clothing, &c., gaining the advantage of wholesale purchase and the elimination of middlemen.

After the failure of co-operative communities according to the dream of Owen, the next venture in co-operative production came from the Christian Socialists. This belongs to the early fifties, and took the form of small self-governing workshops. They did not succeed, partly from over-guidance from the promoters and consequent loss of initiative, partly from the ignorance and lack of education of the members. By 1855 the attempt was recognized to have failed.

The story of co-operative distribution is far different. As early as 1785 we find an attempt being made by a band of consumers to supply themselves with food and clothes, and so avoid the tyranny of the truck shop, and in 1833 there were said to be in existence 400 co-operative societies. In 1844 came the Rochdale Pioneers, who opened in Toad Lane the store

that has served as a model for all future development. They set out to establish a retail shop for clothes, provisions, &c., to build a bakery, houses, and recreation rooms for the members. The principle of the retail store was sale at market prices with cash payments and a return of the profits to members in proportion to their purchases. Thus if the profits at the end of the year proved to be 2*s.* 6*d.* on every £1 turnover, then each member was credited with 2*s.* 6*d.* on every £1 in value he had purchased. This system was later adopted by all co-operative societies, and is the characteristic of the movement. It was soon found that it would be desirable for the retail stores to produce some goods as well as sell them. Hence arose bakeries, corn-mills, tailors' workshops, and boot and shoe factories. The advantages of such stores are obvious :

(*a*) The consumer controls his own supplies, he cuts out the middleman's profits.

(*b*) He is saved the loss, common to retail trade, of speculative buying. The ordinary shop has to rely on itself to judge whether there is a sale for such or such an article ; the co-operative store only buys what its members have notified it that they want, for the directors are a directly elected committee of its members. Consequently, a well-managed co-operative store need have no surplus stock that has to be sold off at reduced prices. Also it is saved much in advertisement and window dressing.

(*c*) Some of the expenses of management are saved by the voluntary service of the controlling committee.

The ' sale at market price ' has the advantage of ensuring that there is no loss, such as might occur if attempts were made to estimate cost price and sell at that. All profits eventually get back to the purchaser. The plan also avoids some friction with rival tradesmen. The allocation of profit according to the amount of purchase is obviously the only fair way, the net result being that the consumer gets his article at nearly cost price. The ' dividend ' is also a great attraction, as a means of saving almost unconsciously, and being allowed to accumulate

makes it of more use. A pound at Christmas is worth a lot more than 160 scattered three-halfpences.

But co-operative societies are more than a mere device for getting necessaries cheaper. They have a social value of increasing weight. They provide a school of self-government for a class that has difficulty in getting it elsewhere; this is especially the case for its women members. It also makes cash payments familiar to weekly wage-earners, whose money is often so near the margin of possible existence that the temptation to live on credit is almost irresistible. Besides this it gives opportunities for thrift and for investment to people whose means are too small for the ordinary avenues. Lastly, the co-operative movement has thrown itself into education and formed libraries and classes and recreative activities for its members.

This, however, is to look rather far ahead, for at first the societies suffered from legal disabilities. They were not illegal like Trade Unions, and the most uncompromising Tory could hardly object to the workers organizing their own supplies in a competitive world. But they had no legal existence, and could neither invest as corporate societies nor protect their funds. In 1846 they were allowed to register as Friendly Societies; in 1852 they gained a legal personality and the right to sell to non-members. Lastly, in 1862 they were allowed limited liability and to invest in other societies to any amount.

The Act of 1862 made possible the formation of Wholesale Co-operative Societies to supply the retail ones, and in 1863 the present C.W.S., the Co-operative Wholesale Society, was formed. The shareholders of this are not individuals, but the retail Co-operative Societies, and the directors are elected by them. At first the Wholesale Society was only a merchant buying supplies in the ordinary market but on a large scale. In 1873 the first productive department, the Crumpsall Biscuit Works, was opened, and this side has since been greatly developed. The C.W.S. now owns concerns as far apart as Denmark (a bacon factory) and Australia (a tallow and oil factory). It has also become banker and insurance company for itself and the stores.

THE SOUTH PROSPECT OF LEICESTER

From *The Universal Magazine*, 1752

These latter developments occurred after 1874, but we may perhaps complete the story here, since the methods remained the same. By 1906 the capital of the British retail stores was £27,000,000, and the total educational grants of all societies £83,000.

Development of the Towns. We have not taken a look at our English towns since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Let us do so now. We shall not look in quite the same directions. Then the great towns were London, Bristol, Norwich, York, and Gloucester; by 1840 there were many others grown to more importance, and some that were practically new. They were nearly all in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the Black Country round Birmingham. The new great towns were of two classes: old boroughs that had entirely outgrown their mediaeval organization and new towns that had never been boroughs, or in some instances more than villages. In both cases they had grown in a manner highly haphazard. People ran up a factory wherever land was cheap or power at hand. A gathering of hovels rose round it, ill built, unventilated, undrained. Later, as more factories grew on the outskirts of the old towns, whole areas were covered by speculative builders and landlords with rows on rows of similar erections. They were often built back to back, with no possibility of ventilation, often half underground. Hence arose the huge slum areas of our industrial towns. The following description of Manchester, taken from the evidence of a doctor, given before a Committee on the Health of Towns in 1840, describes a typical case:

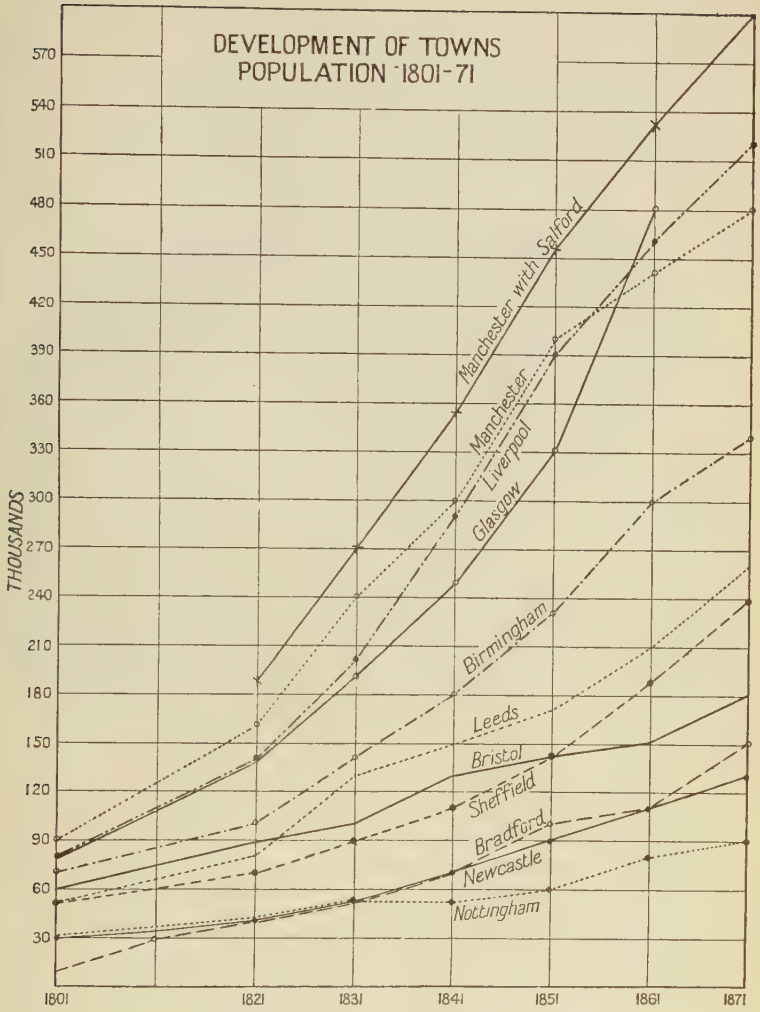
'Until 12 years ago there was no paving or sewering Act in any of the townships: even in the township of Manchester, containing in the year 1831 upwards of 142,000 inhabitants, this was the case; . . . at the present time the paving of streets proceeds rapidly in every direction and great attention is given to the drains. . . . Manchester has no building Act, and hence, with the exception of certain central streets, over which the Police Act gives the Commissioners power, each proprietor builds as he pleases. New cottages, with or without cellars, huddled together row behind row, may be seen springing up in

THE SOUTH WEST PROSPECT OF LIVERPOOLE

From *The Universal Magazine*, 1751

many parts, but especially in the township of Manchester, where the land is higher in price than the land for cottage sites in other townships is. With such proceedings as these the authorities cannot interfere. A cottage now may be badly drained, the streets may be full of pits, brimful of stagnant water, the receptacle of dead cats and dogs, yet no one may find fault. The number of cellar residences . . . is very great in all quarters of the town; and even in Hulme, a large portion of which consists of cottages recently erected, the same practice is continued. That it is an evil must be obvious on the slightest consideration, for how can a hole underground of from 12 to 15 feet square admit of ventilation so as to fit it for human habitation? . . . Manchester has no public park or other grounds where the population can walk and breathe the fresh air. New streets are rapidly extending in every direction, and so great already is the expansion of the town, that those who live in the most populous quarters can seldom hope to see the green face of nature. . . . In this respect Manchester is disgracefully defective; more so perhaps than any other town in the empire. Every advantage of nature has been sacrificed to the getting of money in the shape of ground rents.'

Up to the passing of the MUNICIPALITIES ACT in 1835 there was much excuse for the muddle. Only corporate towns were in a position to do anything, and even they required special private Acts in each case. Bristol took power in 1806 to have street lamps, to make sewers, and pave streets. It began to light by gas in 1819. Norwich had secured lighting powers before 1806, and in that year obtained the further power to pave streets, make sewers and cesspools, have watchmen, cleanse street surfaces, and deal with projecting houses. Its improvement rate was limited to 4*s.* on half the annual rent, and if the poor rate exceeded 5*s.* 6*d.* the improvement rate was to be cut to 3*s.* Leeds in 1790 secured power to provide a water supply; this was very unusual. Birmingham obtained an Act in 1812 giving it certain control of builders and forbidding any new buildings to be thatched. Sweeping and cleansing footways was placed on the inhabitants of the houses, though they might compound for it; steam-engines were to consume their own smoke. Manchester was not a corporate town, and there the


DEVELOPMENT OF TOWNS
POPULATION 1801-71
THOUSANDS
570
540
510
480
450
420
390
360
330
300
270
240
210
180
150
120
90
60
30
1801
1821
1831
1841
1851
1861
1871
Manchester with Salford
Manchester
Liverpool
Glasgow
Birmingham
Leeds
Bristol
Sheffield
Bradford
Newcastle
Nottingham

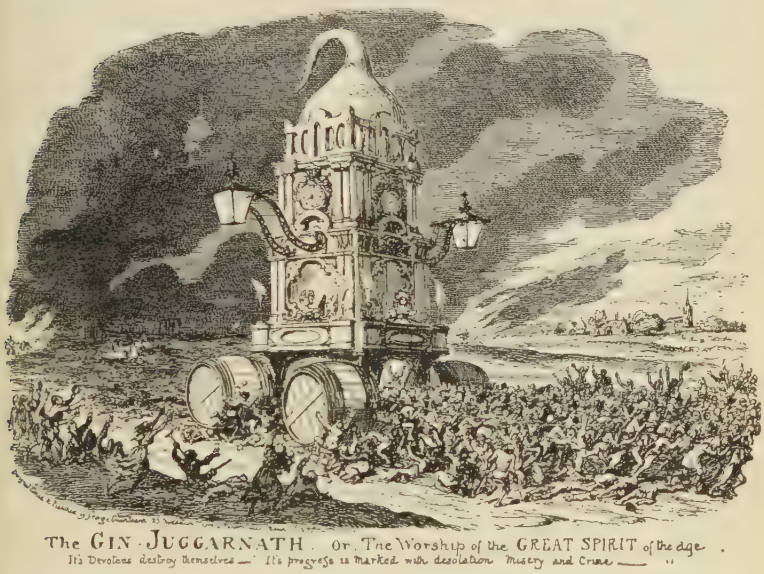
earliest Improvement Act was 1826, and it only referred to one township, Ardwick.

Disease was of course rampant, where thousands lived herded together without sanitation. Small-pox deaths were 102, 88, and 92 per thousand deaths in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, and 73, 43, and 35 in the first three of the nineteenth, so even the beginnings of improvements in hygiene told considerably. Typhus and jail fever were common, cholera a frequent visitor.

The regulation of the drink trade is instructive. Between 1787 and 1815 the justices had made great and successful efforts to control the traffic, but after 1815 free trade in ale and ale-houses became the cry, and in 1830 an Act was passed allowing any one who paid two guineas and executed a bond to retail beer and cider (not spirits); 30,000 beer-houses sprang into existence, and by 1869 there were 50,000. In 1825 fully licensed houses numbered 50,000, and in 1872 there were 70,000. In Birmingham in 1848 there was one public-house for every 166 inhabitants. After 1870 justices' control was resumed, but the pre-1869 houses were not allowed to be closed except for misconduct, and this lasted till 1903.

Up to 1830 the well-to-do lived in the centres of the towns, and the hutches for the workers were mostly run up on the outskirts; rich and poor alike suffered from the absence of sanitation, and their death-rate was probably about equal. After 1830 the rich began to move outwards to suburbs, and the poor settled in courts and alleys behind the business area. No attempt was made to control the method of building or the accommodation of these places; cottages built in back courts were common in the small towns of the earlier centuries, but it was during the 1830–70 period that the pernicious idea of back-to-back houses arose. Birmingham has to-day 40,000 of these death-traps, and the problem of destroying them becomes more expensive every year. It is estimated that a district of back-to-back houses has a death-rate 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. higher than that of similar congregations of poor workers where

there is space between the houses. Modern hygiene lays down twelve houses to the acre as a maximum for efficient health; the industrial towns have thousands of houses crowded forty to the acre. And it must be remembered that in 1851 half the population was living in urban districts, and by 1881 two-thirds. Back-to-back houses are no longer built; Birmingham forbade


The GIN-JUGGARNATH. Or, The Worship of the GREAT SPIRIT of the age.
It's Devotees destroy themselves — It's progress is marked with desolation Misery and Crime —

George Cruikshank on the drink problem of the nineteenth century. Cartoon issued 1834.

their construction in 1870, but the slum legacy is ours to deal with as best we may.

Since 1870 there has been an improving standard of hygiene, as shown by the figures for Birmingham. In 1912 the death-rate among the old houses was 26, in a newly built working-class district 13. Even now Birmingham comes seventh on the list of high death-rates of English towns, Liverpool and Manchester holding pre-eminence at the top. What can be done

by a city determined to clear its slums is shown in Leicester, whose death-rate is the lowest for English towns, and in its worst ward does not rise above 18. In Middlesbrough, on the other hand, a new town that rose after the miseries of the older cities should have been a warning, and where town-planning on lines learnt by experience was possible, so little care has been taken that not 10 per cent. of the houses are properly furnished with drainage.[1] The standard of housing for the workers is even yet none too high, but there is at least hope that the nation will refuse to create further slums where children are only born to die like flies or to grow up stunted, diseased, and morally debased.

The chief Acts for town improvement have been :

The Town Improvement Clauses Act, 1847.
Markets and Fairs Clauses Act.
Town Police Clauses Act, 1847.
Public Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846.
Public Health Act, 1848.
Nuisances Removal Acts, 1853, 1863, 1866.
Sanitary Acts, 1866, 1868, and 1870.

Then in 1872 and 1875 came the PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS covering the whole country, and a new chapter began.

Summary. 1. These forty years cover the period in which the changes known as the Industrial Revolution worked themselves out on the lines of *laisser-faire*, tempered by the protests of the humaner and more civilized parts of the nation. The first fifteen years were times of great hardship, followed by a burst of prosperity such as had previously been unknown. Production increased mightily, especially in the foundation industry of iron on which all the others depended. Progress both mechanical and chemical was rapid, leading to the discoveries which in the end were to replace the age of iron by that of steel.

2. The battle for factory legislation was fought out during this time. The first Act that was in the least effective had been passed at the end of our last period; by 1874 there was on the

[1] All the above figures are for 1913.

Statute Book a considerable code of laws protecting women and children, and indirectly men, from long hours and exploitation. An attempt was even being made to extend the code to workshops and to the home worker if working for wages. Much remained to be done, but great progress had been made in the work of civilizing industrial life.

3. Modern Trade Unionism is the product of the fifties. After a time of terrible poverty and depression the workers settled down to the slow but sure process of building up powerful societies, combining mutual help in trouble and sickness with a defensive policy against attacks from employers. Their first care was to secure a legal position by obtaining legislation. This they triumphantly achieved in 1875. The chief forces were the 'new Unions', of which the Amalgamated Society of Engineers was the most prominent, led by an able group of workmen, known as the 'Junta'. They believed in political rather than industrial action, and somewhat neglected both the need and the latent power of the 'unskilled' workers.

4. The concentration of capital into large units began in certain industries about 1850, and increased during the next twenty-five years. Joint-stock enterprises were not numerous till after 1860, and the typical business of the period was a firm of one or more owners, the partnership being rarely shared by more than two or three. Capitalist and entrepreneur were one. Still it is possible to see over the whole period a steady increase in the size of businesses and an increasing proportion of fixed capital to total capital. Machinery, as it became more complex and expensive, tied up more money; swifter transit and communication made smaller stocks possible, and lessened, therefore, the necessary circulating capital.

5. Co-operative stores were a feature of the times; they rapidly increased after the success of the 'Rochdale Pioneers' in 1844, and helped considerably in establishing a more independent and self-reliant outlook among the workers.

6. 1830–70 was an evil time in the story of our towns. No regulation or control was attempted, and hovels were dumped wherever the builder chose, without water, drainage, or air.

Back-to-back houses in thousands appeared and are still with us; our slum problem is our heritage from these years. Attempts at improvement were so fought, in the name of *laisser-faire*, that legislation was always belated. It was not till after 1870 that the country was effectually roused to the needs of a social hygiene.

3. Communications. World Trade

GREAT as had been the industrial expansion of the first third of the nineteenth century, it was fully equalled by the resulting commercial growth of the second. The need for markets for the new output was met and made possible by the most revolutionary invention of history. So great have been the effects of steam locomotion, that it is almost impossible for us to visualize the world as it was and had always been down to 1840. The discovery of the New World in the fifteenth century had lifted the horizon to an almost fabulous distance; the new motor force brought that horizon within a few weeks' visit. World exchange of goods and of intercourse became possible; the barriers that shut off race from race, that kept apart friends or foes, were threatened. The economic history of one nation begins to include the world.

Railways. If the period from 1800 to 1834 might be described as the Canal and Coaching Age, that we are immediately considering is without challenge the Railway Era. In 1834 railways were a little more advanced, perhaps, than air traffic in 1914, but their success was still a matter for speculation. By 1874 the great mass of the present lines were built; the division into the familiar dozen or so great companies was already accomplished; to all intents and purposes the railway system as we know it now was in being.

The origin of railways must take us back for a moment to the eighteenth century. Let us note first that the genesis of the system was not the locomotive but the track. It was the track

that at the moment made the locomotive possible, though, as Mr. H. G. Wells has pointed out,[1] it has been an influence retarding development ever since. At the end of the seventeenth century wooden railways existed in connexion with certain collieries, and about 1750 the wagons running on them were given cast-iron wheels. These early tracks worked by gravity

Illustrating the early use of rails for coal-wagons. About 1700.

on long slopes with primitive brakes, and accidents were frequent. Later the wooden rails were topped with iron plates, and complete cast-iron rails took the place of wooden ones about 1767; in 1776 they were made with an inner flange, and were called plate-ways (hence the name platelayer), tram-ways, or dram-ways. In 1788 the flanges were transferred to the wheels. The next name given was 'iron rail-ways', a name retained by the principal European languages, though we, as usual, have cut it short.

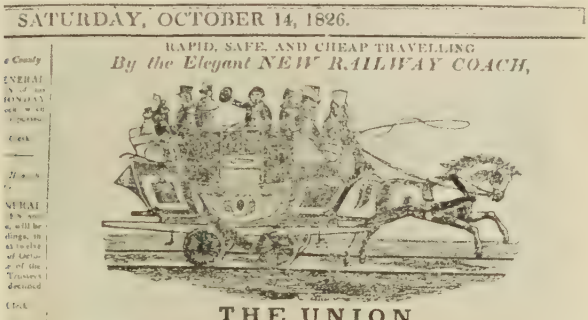
But it was not only in connexion with collieries that railways with horse wagons appeared; canals began to take powers to

[1] H. G. Wells, *Anticipations*, chap. I.

make railways at the ends of the canals to facilitate the arrival and dispatch of goods. In 1776 the Trent and Mersey Canal did so, and some of its tramways with flanged rails were still in use for wagons and carts in 1911. It was the fact that ordinary wagons could be drawn by horses along these rails that gave rise to the original idea in the first railways that, like the roads, they should be open to all who chose to use them. The early companies built the rails; they might or might not supply wagons and horse- or steam-power, but they expected to open the road to all who cared to pay toll. But when flanged wheels took the place of flanged rails, the ordinary cart or carriage could not travel on the lines, and it was soon found that it was impossible to run steam locomotives and horse traffic on the same track. Consequently the railway companies soon became their own carriers, but the early idea has left us a legacy in the thousands of private railway trucks that still block the sidings and impede the traffic with 'returned empties'.

The first public railway was built in 1801 from Wandsworth to Croydon, but only for horse-drawn vehicles. In 1821 a line of wooden rails for horse wagons was projected from Darlington to Stockton with the object of opening up the South Durham coal-field. It was George Stephenson who persuaded the promoters to have iron rails and a steam-engine. It was opened in 1825, and the locomotive, which weighed seven tons, had a perpendicular cylinder and only one flue to the boiler, and whose chimney soon got red hot with any speed, proved very expensive. Its average speed was four to six miles an hour, and its highest eight. Between the intervals of running goods by steam, the line was open to coaches paying tolls, and it was found these could be drawn by a single horse. The steam locomotive proved so expensive that the plan was nearly abandoned, when Hackworth designed the 'Royal George' locomotive, which proved cheaper than horses. In 1832 seven coaches belonging to various proprietors were running fifty journeys a week, and in 1833 the railway owners bought out the coaching interest and conveyed passengers themselves; in 1834 they drew passengers as well as goods by steam.

In 1826 the Liverpool and Manchester Railway got its Act of Parliament; in 1828 it decided on using steam-power, and in 1830 it opened with Stephenson's 'Rocket', with an average speed of fourteen miles per hour, and a maximum of twenty-nine. With this railway begins the story of their fight for existence, and one must fairly admit that the railways began it, though justifiably. There were two routes for goods between Liverpool



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1826.

RAPID, SAFE, AND CHEAP TRAVELLING

By the Elegant NEW RAILWAY COACH,

THE UNION,

Which will COMMENCE RUNNING on the STOCKTON and DARLINGTON RAILWAY, on MONDAY the 16th day of October, 1826,

And will ply at Yarm, and pass within a mile of Middleton Spa, on its way from Stockton to Darlington, and over-turn.

FARES. Inside 1½d.—Outside, 1d. per Mile. Parcels in proportion.

No gratuities expected by the Guard or Coachman.

N.B. The Proprietors will not be accountable for any Parcel of more than £5. value, unless entered and paid for accordingly.

The UNION will run from the Black Lion Hotel and New Inn, Stockton, to the New Inn, Yarm, and to the Black Swan Inn, near the Croft Bridge, Darlington, at each of which Inns passengers and parcels are booked, and the times of starting may be ascertained on application at the Union Inn, Yarm, and Talbot Inn, Darlington.

On and after Monday the 30th day of October, the Four Days at Yarm, the Union will leave Darlington at six in the morning for Yarm, [illegible] for Darlington again at six in the evening; in the intermediate time, each day, it will ply constantly between Stockton and Yarm, leaving each place every half hour

A HORSE-DRAWN COACH ON RAILS running between Stockton and Darlington. Newspaper notice, Oct. 14, 1826.

and Manchester, besides the high road with its turnpikes, by river and by canal. There was a theory that canal and river were competitors, and that, according to the economics then fashionable, competition would keep down rates. But the directors of these two enterprises seem to have anticipated most of the methods of twentieth-century 'combines' or 'trusts', and by agreements to keep up rates exploited the public shamefully. Delays, favouritism, mounting charges for warehousing, exasperated the traders of the cotton towns, while the enormous profits of canals made the robbery manifest. It was these dis-

gruntled traders who set out to get the railway, though they had to bribe the canal interest with 1,000 shares to stop its opposition. It was not surprising that the canal shareholders were alarmed. Profits such as theirs human nature is loath to forgo. In 1824 the shares of the Birmingham Canal Company, costing £140 about the year 1770, were worth £2,840, and they were not alone. It is important to realize the opposition to the railways in England, because it is one of the main causes of that over-capitalization that makes the problem difficult to-day.

1. As we have seen, the first opposition was from the canals. This greatly increased the cost of securing the necessary Act of Parliament for starting a railway, even where it did not involve direct bribery. Often the canals had to be bought off, either by the present of shares in the new venture or by purchase outright.

2. The second vested interest that stood in the road was that of the turnpike trusts and their investors. They were not so wealthy nor so formidable, but they did what they could.

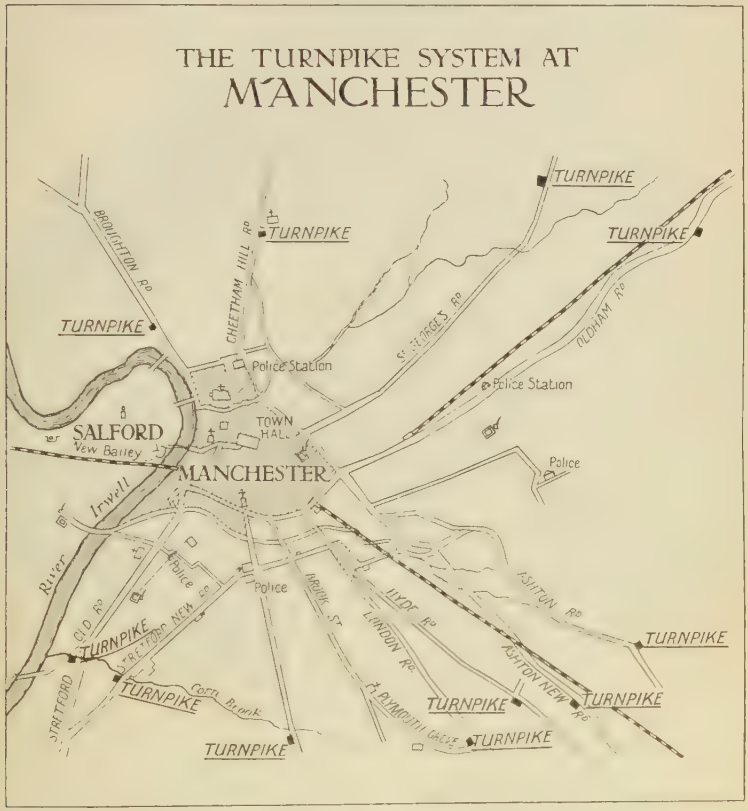
3. Then came the coaching interest, which, as we have seen,[1] was an extensive one. This could not be bought, since its stock-in-trade was no use to the railways.

4. Most formidable of all were the landowners, who were convinced, or professed to be, that both the produce and the amenities of their estates would be greatly deteriorated. Their genuineness is open to suspicion in some cases, because of their extortion. One landowner having secured £3,000 for a plot of land, demanded and got another £10,000 for 'consequential damages', which it is hard to believe he had real ground to fear. In the event his property was increased in value 20 per cent. by the line. Another, a great landowner of the eastern counties, extorted £120,000 for land worth £5,000, before he would drop his opposition to the Bill. There are many other stories of the kind. There were, however, honourable exceptions; the Duke of Bedford repaid £150,000 compensation when he found his property benefited instead of injured; Lord Taunton returned £15,000 out of

[1] See p. 398

£35,000, because he had not suffered as much as he had expected.

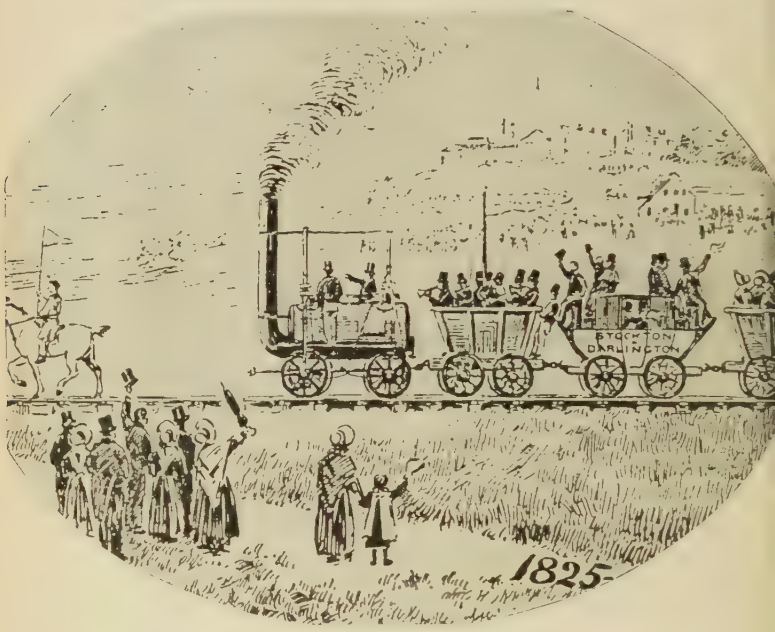
5. The towns, too, offered great opposition. This is more difficult to understand. Owners of beautiful country estates



The Turnpike System at Manchester about 1850

might perhaps genuinely fear that they would be injured, but why an industrial town like Northampton should object to the passage of a railway or the establishment of its locomotive works there, it is hard to see. The objection prevailed, and the line took a longer and more costly route with a tunnel, which

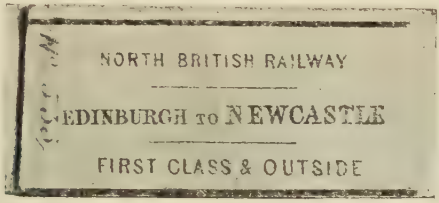
eventually cost £300,000. We are glad to-day that the railways were forced to skirt places like Oxford and Stratford, but it is strange to find so much opposition from districts already industrialized, and in an age that was blotting out miles of English landscape with the smoke of factories and the plague spots of the industrial dwellings of the thirties.



STEPHENSON'S FIRST TRAIN, Sept. 27, 1825.

6. The attitude of the press was, in general, hostile, though its arguments were as silly as ever they are nowadays. Here are some specimens: the *Quarterly Review* in 1825 condemned proposals for making railways general as 'visionary schemes unworthy of notice', and further, 'we should as soon expect the people of Woolwich to suffer themselves to be fired off from one of Congreve's ricochet-rockets as trust themselves to the mercy of such a machine going at such a rate (eighteen or

twenty miles per hour). We will back old Father Thames against the Woolwich Railway for any sum.' Again, in 1835 another, after doubting if women in particular would endure 'the fatigue, the misery and danger of being dragged through


NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY

EDINBURGH TO NEWCASTLE

FIRST CLASS & OUTSIDE

AN EARLY RAILWAY TICKET

COMPLETION OF A CONTINUOUS LINE OF RAILWAY COMMUNICATION

FROM

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE TO LONDON,

JUNE 18. 1844.

FREE TRAIN TO CELEBRATE THE ABOVE,

PROVIDED BY THE DIRECTORS OF THE

BRANDLING JUNCTION RAILWAY COMPANY.

DIRECTORS.

J. W. WILLIAMSON, Esq., Chairman

T. E. HEADLAM, Esq., Deputy Chairman

ROBERT WILLIAM BRANDLING, Esq., Managing Director

EDWARD BLACKETT BEAUMONT, WILLIAM BOLAM, GEORGE JOHNSON, JOHN CARR, THOMAS GRAY, WILLIAM MOUNTAIN, RALPH NAYLOR, RALPH PARK PHILIPSON, JAMES SILLICK, NICHOLAS WOOD

ENGINEER. RALPH COULTHARD

SECRETARY. JAMES POTTS

TO LEAVE OAKWELLGATE STATION, GATESHEAD, AT 9 A.M., AND RETURN FROM DARLINGTON AT 5 P.M.

ADMIT THE BEARER TO THE ABOVE.

No. James Potts Secretary

TICKET celebrating the completion of the Newcastle to London Railway, 1844.

the air at the rate of 20 miles an hour, all their lives at the mercy of a tin pipe, or a copper boiler, or a pebble in the line of way', went on to draw a lurid picture of the disasters that would follow if they did succeed. They would 'destroy all the relations which exist between man and man, overthrow all

mercantile relations, overturn the metropolitan markets, drain the provinces of all their resources and create, at the peril of life, all sorts of confusion and distress'. Among the disasters foretold may be instanced springs drying up and meadows parched, cows giving no milk, horses dying out, houses crushed by the railway embankments; everybody except a few railway investors would be ruined, and last, final and most conclusive, the locomotives would not work because, even if the wheels turned, they were too heavy to move!

7. To all this cumulative opposition Parliament turned a deaf ear: for good and for evil it was committed to the doctrine of *laisser-faire*. One fear only it had, that the railways might become monopolies, and to this end encouraged scattered, small, and rival enterprises, rather than a wide-viewed, comprehensive dealing with the whole change on a national basis.

All these seven factors went to swell the cost of making English railways. It must be remembered that other nations had the benefit of our experience; we were the first in the field, and paid for our inexperience. At the same time other nations were not so committed to doctrinaire shibboleths of *laisser-faire*. The result has been that English railways have cost nearly double those of any other country, except Belgium. The cost of the permissive Act seems to have been anything from £18,000 to £89,000; to get the Act for the Blackwall line of 5½ miles cost £75,673. This is less surprising when we read that counsel were paid by the day and made enormously long speeches, e. g. five hours on one out of thirteen subdivisions of one clause of a Bill containing 193. To the landowners went sums running into thousands per mile of route, the London and Birmingham costing £6,300 per mile, the London and Brighton £8,000.

But the worst characteristic of the railway venture was its piecemeal character. The fear of monopoly and the horror of its only real preventive, State purchase, caused Parliament to insist on small companies, and if possible rival ones. As early as 1820 Thomas Grey urged that the matter should be planned and controlled from a national standpoint, and a system linking the

big towns and radiating in six great trunk lines from London devised, but was laughed at as a visionary. So by 1844 the average length of the railways planned was fifteen miles. After that date came the railway mania, much of it purely speculative, but the chief companies had to buy out these projected lines in self-defence, and so had often to raise more capital than was justified by the probable traffic.

STEAM CARRIAGE designed to run between London and Birmingham, 1832.

The following figures indicate the boom :

In 1845 Parliament sanctioned 118 railways of 2,700 miles with capital of £56,000,000.

In 1846 Parliament sanctioned 270 railways of 4,538 miles with capital of £132,000,000.

In 1847 Parliament sanctioned 190 railways of 1,354 miles with capital of £39,500,000.

And of this total of 8,592 miles, 1,560 miles were abandoned by consent of Parliament in 1850.

Nowhere, perhaps, has the doctrine of ' let-alone ' been more disastrous than in our railways. Again and again the Government tried to induce the House of Commons to give it some control of this vast monopoly, but in vain. The railway interests were powerful, many members were shareholders, and much as they disliked monopoly, they disliked Government interference with commerce still more. In 1844 a Special Committee, with Gladstone as chairman, urged that the Board of Trade should be given power to revise rates and charges at intervals, and that Parliament should assert definite terms on which at the end of fifteen years the nation might purchase the railways. But the Bill to this effect was so modified in committee, that the resulting Act was useless.

In 1846 another attempt at control by a Board of Commissioners failed likewise from the indifference of Parliament. By 1853 the railways were countering the parliamentary policy of rival lines by amalgamation to such an extent, that a committee was appointed to investigate. They reported that amalgamation was increasing, that it had advantages of economy, though it did raise the problem of monopoly, but in any case Parliament was powerless to stop it. The Railway and Canal Act of 1854 followed, and laid down that lines must not obstruct each other or exercise preference in interchange of traffic, and so made it easier for one line to obtain running powers over another. From 1854 onwards amalgamations continued, and by 1874 the condition was not greatly different from that we knew in 1914. The Great Western Railway with its 2,993 miles was made up of 115 smaller lines.

Two things, however, Parliament did do for our railway development: it forced the companies to cater forthe third-class passenger, and to pursue a policy of safety first. In early days the third-class passenger was not recognized as a paying proposition, and when the companies condescended to carry him at all they certainly did not make travelling pleasant for him, not only herding him in open wagons without seats, but contriving as far as possible by running few trains with third-class coaches to

force him to choose between a higher class or a night on the platform. As early as 1844 Parliament interposed and decreed that every line carrying passengers must run one train daily which would stop at every station if required and carry third-class passengers at 1*d.* a mile. This was the 'Parliamentary Train' of the Mikado's song, and it 'allowed Lazarus as well as Dives to travel on a Sunday'.[1] The pioneer character of the English railways and the determination of Parliament to make these terrific engines of desperate speed as safe as could be managed caused our tracks to be built with a solidity and our trains to be run with a care that other nations have failed to emulate. It too, added to the original cost; but in this case we hardly regard it as a fault.

It is interesting to note another way in which the railways forced the devotees of 'let-alone' to consider, if only for a moment, the possibilities latent in their policy. The condition of the 200,000 navvies engaged in railway construction challenged public attention, and in 1846 a committee, appointed to inquire into it, reported. The state of affairs shown up was very bad: preventable accidents were common, truck general and perhaps unavoidable, the housing abominable. So impressed were the inquirers that they flung non-interference to the winds and boldly recommended that the railway companies should have to pay compensation for accidents, wages should be paid weekly, and a Special Board should veto any new railway that did not provide proper accommodation for its navvies. Needless to say the committee was before its age, and Parliament did nothing; but its report was the harbinger of all that interference with the 'rights' of the individual to exploit his neighbour, which has become the commonplace of later times. It was in connexion with railways that Gladstone in 1844 first ventured to talk of nationalization; it was in connexion with their construction that the helplessness of the adult male worker, as distinguished from women and children, was first officially admitted.

The chief agent in the amalgamation of the lines was the

[1] Speech by Sheil, Hansard (third series), lxxvi. 1190.

Railway Clearing House, started in 1842 to organize through traffic of trucks over various lines and to adjust amounts to be paid to each line for its use. It led to a common classification and rating of goods and to general common action.

Meanwhile what happened to the canals? To a large extent relatively they fell into disuse. There were several causes for this.

1. The railways were forced by the opposition of the canal companies to buy some of them out, at any rate sufficiently to block any possible through traffic. Eventually they owned more than a third of the total mileage. Once in their possession the canals were, if not neglected, at least not pushed. This was to be expected, for canals only charged for use of way, the barges took the carrying charges, and the wharf owners those for wharfage. The railways both carried and warehoused.

2. The canals had been so prosperous that they had not bestirred themselves to organize national as distinct from local traffic. To go from Birmingham to Hull meant using ten separate canals and ten bookings. Even if they had tried it would not have been easy to create a national system. In many places the locks were small and would only take 20-ton barges, and the cost of enlarging would be serious. Again, if the tolls had been equalized it did not follow that the haulage charges would be. Once railways were established, no private capital could have been found for the necessary reconstruction. France did it with great advantage to her citizens; but it was done by the State, not by private enterprise, and no English statesman of the nineteenth century would have dared to suggest such State action here.

3. Much of the trade that on the Continent is carried over canals with us is done by coastwise shipping. The steamships were as great a factor in the disuse of the canals as was the steam locomotive.

4. Canal carriage is slow, must be done in bulk, and involves much supplementary traffic at terminals. The railways carry small parcels as well as tons of coal and ore, deliver speedily

and even to the door of great works and the holds of ships. England rapidly organized her commerce on the basis of speed, small stocks, and through bookings. The canals could not keep up with it. In all departments England was changing in the direction where speed was essential. The coal merchant could work with smaller capital if he could get supplies speedily and without much storing; all kinds of traders welcomed the warehouses the railways provided for housing goods for short periods at a charge. Barges take a lot of filling; the railways took all consignments, little or big; no need to charter a truck.

Shipping. Between the years 1830 and 1850 America seriously challenged our supremacy in merchant shipping. Steam was still in the experimental stage for cargo vessels, and not till after 1840 was its success certain even for passengers and mails. Meanwhile the Americans devised a vessel to rival the British sailing-ship, which was still built of hard wood, broad beamed, and safe rather than swift. These new American 'clipper' ships were built of soft wood and therefore cheaper, though not so strong, and were five or six times as long as their beam. Their speed left the British ship far behind. But after 1850 British owners began to turn out clipper ships, though, as safety and endurance still attracted them, they continued to use hard wood. This made them dearer, but on the other hand enabled them to carry their cargo on long voyages undamaged, and soon the gain of America was challenged. The Civil War put an end to the rivalry for four years, and after 1866 American shipyards did not renew it. That nation turned its attention to internal reconstruction and expansion westward. England continued to build clippers up to 1874, chiefly for the China tea trade, there being a theory that steam would damage the tea. In 1863 the steamer *Robert Lowe* safely delivered an undamaged cargo of tea, and after 1874 the clippers were transferred to the Australian trade, where they continued to 'race the southern wool' till the end of the nineteenth century. But during twenty years of our period the hundred days' race from China with the new seasons tea had been a sporting event.

Meanwhile steam was gradually showing what it could do. Neglecting the *Savannah*,[1] the first real steam crossing of the Atlantic was accomplished in 1838 by four ships—the *Sirius*, the *Great Western*, the *Liverpool*, and the *Royal William*; the shortest time was fifteen days. In 1839 the Cunard Line was founded with four steamers of about 1,150 tons, wooden ships, paddle-wheeled, about 200 feet long, and 425 h.p. They had a speed

TWO FAMOUS TEA CLIPPERS, the *Ariel* and the *Taeping*.
Illustrated London News, 1866.

of almost eight knots, and used some 450 tons of coal between Liverpool and Boston. They also carried sails.

All these early steamships were of wood. Construction of wooden walls on iron frames was the first step towards iron ships. It was found that only teak had sufficient oil in it to prevent deterioration of both the iron and the wood on contact. In 1843 the problem of iron ships was solved by Brunel, who built the *Great Britain* of Bristol. It was a wonderful achievement, for every detail had to be thought out from the beginning; e. g. there were no machines, as now, for punching the rivet

[1] See p. 404.

holes, and every one of the thousands of holes had to be drilled by hand. She was not only an iron ship, but she was fitted with the new screw propeller. It is doubtful if the huge *Great Eastern*, of which more later, asked as much constructive genius of her designer as did this first iron ship of large size. Brunel, who was not only a designer of ships but also the builder of the Great Western Railway, is another of the inventors whom we owe to alien immigration, for his father was a Frenchman

AN EARLY CUNARDER, with paddle-wheels and sails.

settled in this country. The *Great Britain* cost £120,000, but she was a commercial success, and lasted sixty years.

The advantages of the iron ship are: (1) it is lighter for the same dimensions; (2) it offers more cargo space; (3) it is stronger; (4) it can be built much bigger; (5) wooden ships cannot stand the vibration of a screw. The great disadvantage of the sailing-ship was the uncertainty and irregularity of its timing. In spite of all this it held its own against steam and iron as a cargo boat for nearly fifty years after steam and iron were usual for passengers and mails. In 1854 the navy had only sixteen steam battleships and eighteen steam frigates. Among the many mistakes of the Mutiny time in 1857 the Government decided to send out troops by sail. They arrived after steamers that started a month later.

The two difficulties facing the early steamships were the great expenditure of fuel and the consequent need for coaling stations. An effort was made to meet these in 1858 by the construction, again by Brunel, of the *Great Eastern*. This ship was to be large enough to carry all its coal for the Australian voyage, and to have both large cargo and passenger space. Unfortunately, it was too far ahead of its time. So far the largest iron ship had been of 3,300 tons and 375 feet in length. The *Great Eastern* was of nearly 19,000 tons, her length 680 feet, beam 82½ feet, coal capacity 10,000 tons, and cargo 6,000 tons. She was to carry 4,000 passengers. She was not outstripped in size till the *Mauretania* was launched in 1907, and she was too big to pay in 1858. On no route was there cargo enough for any one voyage to fill her, nor were 4,000 passengers a voyage likely to appear. Even then she need not have been the disastrous failure she was but for gross business mismanagement. From 1863 to 1874 she did excellent work as a cable-layer. In 1890 she was broken up.

At the very time that the *Great Eastern* was building, the question of fuel economy was being solved, and not on lines of size. The invention of the COMPOUND ENGINE reduced the coal consumption by one-half, and made all sorts of developments possible. There was little new departure till 1870, but much progress on lines already established. In 1870 the White Star Line was founded, and began the custom of catering for the comfort of passengers, which has so enormously developed on the Atlantic route, till it has reached the present point of vulgar ostentation and waste of human effort, demanded apparently by a small group of self-made millionnaires and their hangers on. The early steps on the path of comfort were, of course, a desirable advance.

The period 1855–70 was the great time of the development of English shipping relative to that of other countries, but her lead was not to go unchallenged. The first step in the opposition was the building of the SUEZ CANAL by Ferdinand de Lesseps with French and Egyptian capital. The project was strongly

opposed by Palmerston and by English public opinion; vested interests were touched, for much English shipping would be useless if the road to the East became one closed to sailing 'clippers'. After seven years Lesseps got his concession from the Khedive in 1856, though the English influence managed to block the Sultan of Turkey's confirmation for another ten. Meanwhile, in 1859, Lesseps got started, and after ten years of colossal work the Canal was opened in 1869. It shortened the

The straight line of the Suez Canal seen from an aeroplane.
Photograph by Mr. Alan Cobham.

distance between London and Bombay by 4,500 miles out of 10,719. The story of how the Canal became British and what we are doing in Egypt comes after 1874. It was a French engineer and French money that made the thing possible.

Docks. The London Docks were enlarged to meet all this new development. In 1835 the VICTORIA DOCK was constructed, and in 1875 the ALBERT. Between these dates there was much amalgamation and increase of docks on the south side of the river, culminating in the opening of the Canada Dock in 1876.

In 1864 the Millwall Dock in the Isle of Dogs was made. In Liverpool between 1834 and 1874 the docks were increased by 200 acres, i. e. they were nearly trebled.

Lastly, a few significant dates may be given.

1837. Invention of the electric telegraph.
1839. Penny post.
1851. First submarine telegraph.
1855. The Meteorological Office was established.
1857. An international code of signals at sea arranged.
1862. International rule of the road at sea established.
1863. Twin-screws first used.
1866. The Atlantic Cable laid.
1870. Telegraphic service transferred to Government.
1874. The International Postal Convention.

The general movement of trade. From 1834 the most striking feature of our commerce and industry is that wave movement of prosperity and depression that is now the commonplace of the competitive system. So far no one has discovered, within the bounds of the present organization, a means of preventing an alternation of over-production and under-consumption, in what seems to be a fairly well defined cycle. As we have seen, the crisis of speculation in 1825–6 was followed by stagnation for eight years; then came a movement forward, and the year 1834 opening with better prospects, developed a still greater craze for speculation. Suddenly every one with a little money saved rushed to invest it in ventures mad or otherwise. Joint-stock banks, as yet of unlimited liability, were the favourite speculation, followed by insurance companies and mines. A London steam-coach company, a substitute for indigo company, a floating club house, all found ready subscribers. Between 1834 and 1836 over 300 companies were formed with capital totalling 135 millions. English finance was soon in a dangerous condition, and in 1837 came a crash in America due to a faulty banking system; the precipitate action of the Bank of England in refusing American bills spread the effect to England. English

THE LONDON DOCKS. St. Katherine's, 1827-8.

THE LONDON DOCKS TO-DAY

THE

LANCASHIRE Emigrant's Farewell.

Farewell parents, we must leave you
And cross the briney ocean wide,
At home midst hunger and starvation,
No longer here we can abide.
Dear parents it is hard to leave you,
Depression drives up far away,
Wipe your griefworn cheek dear mother,
Leave of weeping, now we pray.

May God now comfort you at home,
Pray for us while on the deep.
Adieu, adieu, to you dear father,
Dry up your tears and do not weep.
Oh, oh, how hard it is to part,
From our friends we love so dear
Poverty swells within our dwellings,
What has thou come to Lancashire.

Farewell brother, farewell sister,
We leave you on your native shore.
Farewell father, farewell mother,
Perhaps we ne'er shall see you more;
One kiss from you friends and relations,
We have not long with you to stay,
Our vessel spreads her swelling sails,
To bear us to a foreign land.

See the vessel weighs her anchor,
We from old England now must part,
To see our friends and parents crying,
It would rend the stoutest heart.
But when the vessel was in motion,
Loud shouts from shore did say farewell,
To see our weeping friends and parents,
Would make your bosom heave and swell.

UNEMPLOYMENT in Lancashire and emigration. A popular broadside

manufacturers had slipped into the way of allowing American merchants to trade on credit; the refusal of the latter's bills left the manufacturers with no capital to go on with. In 1837 there were 50,000 unemployed in Manchester alone, and it was some years before trade recovered.

All through the forties prices declined, and in the period 1840–5 trade and industry were suffering and the condition of the people desperate.

The railway boom of 1845 onwards heralded the recovery, though there was a financial crisis in 1847,[1] and in England largely neutralized the effect of the potato failure. Thousands of unemployed found work among the navvies, an enormous impetus was given to the iron trade, and the new industry of machinery and machine tools doubled and trebled. Prices rose, but production and wages rose too, and by 1850 the country's prosperity seemed to contemporaries astounding. To them the wonders of the 1851 Exhibition in its miracle house of glass appeared to herald a golden age of wealth and happiness. Products and manufactures from Great Britain and her colonies, from all the principal states of Europe, were

[1] See p. 560.

exhibited side by side. Prussia sent chemical dyes, France her unmatched silks and velvets and the new product of beet sugar. Krupps won a medal for a new and superior cast steel, while Britain displayed to the admiring eyes of her citizens her

THE RAILWAY JUGGERNAUT OF 1845
Cartoon from *Punch*.[1]

woollen and cotton fabrics, her machinery, railway lines and rolling stock, unrivalled as yet from any quarter of the globe. Even the manual worker shared the hopes of the nation, for this period, as we have seen,[2] was also one of Trade Union expansion and steady advance in the standard of life. Even advancing prices, the effect of the new gold discoveries, though they diminished real wages, stimulated production, and the war years of 1854–5 meant more spending and more call for products.

In 1857 came the reaction, precipitated by another banking

[1] Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.
[2] See p. 508.

crisis in America, and many English banks suspended payment. Prices dropped 20 per cent. to 30 per cent. The Bank Charter Act was suspended and the Bank allowed to increase its issue of notes, and gradually stability returned.

The American Civil War, 1861–5, produced a disastrous effect in Lancashire, since 85 per cent. of our raw cotton came from America. The Northern Government proclaimed a blockade of the southern ports, and by 1862 the price of raw cotton had quadrupled, all mills were working only part time, and 50,000 men and women were totally unemployed. By Christmas 1862 half a million were receiving regular relief. This crisis was, of course, due to a special cause and was local only, but in 1866 came the recurring money crisis, when the great firm of Overend and Gurney failed. There was a great trade revival in 1870–4. This began early in 1870, and the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War stimulated it. Mülhausen, Calais, and Lyons closed down for trade purposes, and practically continental rivalry of English products was in abeyance. The trade prosperity led to an increase of spare capital and consequent speculation. There was a boom in joint-stock shares in mines, railways, and tramways, partly due to the drop in the price of steel rails following on the lapse of the Bessemer patents. The payment of the French indemnity to Germany of £200,000,000 disturbed the money market in 1872 to some extent, and prices rose. Thanks to Trade Union activity, wages followed them, and the prosperity of 1870–4 was shared by all classes, except the agricultural, whose depression was already beginning.

The Growth of Joint-Stock Business. In 1834 joint-stock business still laboured under many difficulties. In the first place the absence of limited liability made prudent folk chary of investing small sums and thereby risking their whole fortune, while on the other hand the unlimited liability of the shareholders gave a credit to the company that was often fictitious, for the assumption that the shareholders had large resources available at need was not always true. Secondly, only by obtaining letters patent from the Crown could the company act

THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851. An early example of photography

as a corporate body and sue or be sued. But limited liability did not yet commend itself to the times, and a committee in 1837 reported against it. In 1844, however, an inquiry showed that the law in the matter covered a great deal of fraud. Bogus companies were common; unsound ones, trading on mythical capital, still more so. The resultant Act of 1844 empowered a register of companies to be made, and gave to all registered companies the power to sue and be sued. This at least helped by encouraging publicity. But in 1855 an Act was passed limiting the liability of members of certain joint-stock companies, and succeeding Acts extended the rule. In 1862 an Act allowed seven or more persons to constitute themselves a company with either limited or unlimited liability. In 1867 limited liability companies might have directors with unlimited liability.

Foreign Trade. The greatly increased production of these years, together with the shortening of distances due to steam traffic, brought about inevitably a search for new markets and for opportunities for investment. It is during this time that the Far East enters fully into the world trade. Trade with China is as old nearly as history, and we have seen how the porcelain of Cathay reached the palaces of Western Europe by way of Russia and the Baltic. The East India Company had for long a monopoly of the China trade by sea, and tea had during the eighteenth century become an important import. The trade was restricted on both sides, for until 1834 the East India Company held a monopoly in Britain, and in China it was confined to a limited body of Chinese merchants responsible to their Government for its proper conduct. The smuggling trade in opium was extensive, as during the eighteenth century it was heavily taxed. In 1796 the Chinese Government forbade its import altogether, owing to the widespread resultant demoralization among the Chinese. The smuggling continued, and when, in the exercise of their rights, the Chinese attacked English ships and burnt imported opium, we forced a war on them, and by the Treaty of Nankin in 1842 obliged them to open certain ports to British trade, including opium, while Hong-Kong was

ceded to Britain. Peel defended the treaty on the ground that India could not afford to sacrifice a revenue of £1,200,000. So greatly did 'business' principles dominate Parliament that Lord Ashley had to withdraw his motion opposing it. In 1847–8 another 'little war' was necessary to force the Chinese to fulfil the treaty. But the trade resulting was not so great as had been expected, and in 1857 Great Britain forced open further doors in China at the mouth of her guns, and extorted permission for British subjects to travel all over the interior. This war was strongly opposed by Gladstone and others, but the country was in no mood to consider ethics, and the Government was supported at the general election. The material advantages gained were large. In 1840 our exports to China were only half a million, in 1858 they were £1,700,000, and in 1878 £3,700,000. The smirch on our fame was perhaps equally great.

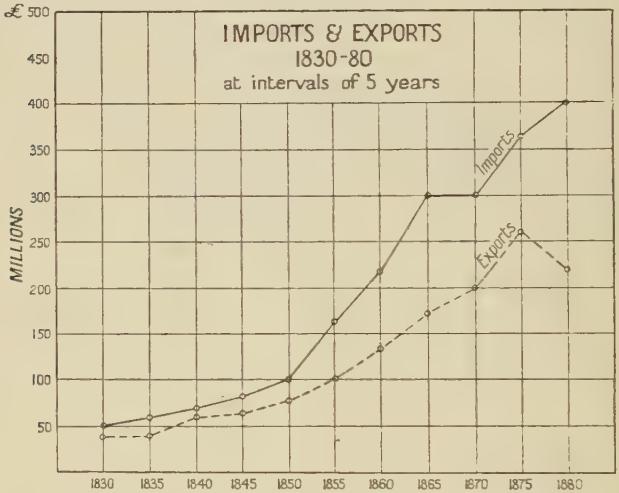
But China was not the only country that tried in vain to bar its doors to a commercialism that knew no scruple. In 1854 the United States had triumphantly forced the Japanese to open a port to their traders, and the English admiral promptly followed suit. In 1858 a treaty was signed between Japan and England. It is possible that America may by now have regretted her action, and that Japan is still uncertain whether it has gained or lost more by contact with Western civilization. Certainly its first experience was unfortunate. It happened that Japan had more gold than silver, and consequently valued its silver coins highest. Trading on the ignorance of the world market of the Japanese merchants, English and American traders rapidly exchanged their silver coins for gold, to the loss of the Japanese. It is said that even English clerks in the service of mercantile houses in China slipped across and converted their monthly salaries paid in silver to gold of the same weight. Sharp practice such as this was not exactly a good omen for the future.

In 1855 a treaty of commerce with Siam was also concluded, and markets in the Niger area were opened up in the early sixties. In 1861 Great Britain acquired Lagos on the west

coast of Africa, and a trade in palm oil replaced the old one in slaves.

Throughout the period much English capital was invested abroad; this was particularly the case with railways. In 1842 an English contractor and English navvies built the railway from Paris to Rouen, and English capital set going many lines in newer lands.

The dependence on one country for the bulk of our cotton



supplies was shown by the American War to be very dangerous, and caused us to look round for fresh sources of supply. There were possibilities in Queensland if English capital could be found; Egypt, which produced a fine cotton of long staple, greatly increased its area of production; Brazil raised its share of the supply from 1 to 10 per cent., and India was encouraged to both a greater and a better crop. English capital was in demand for all.

The graph above shows the great rise in our foreign trade after 1850, and the increasing excess of imports over exports, accounted for on p. 397. The effect of the American War,

1861–5, is clearly shown, especially in the cessation of the rise in imports. In figures the change may be summarized by saying that between 1834 and 1846 our imports increased at an average rate of 3½ per cent. per annum, from 1846 to 1872 at an average rate of 6$\frac{1}{10}$ per cent. per annum. Some of this remarkable increase was due to the REPEAL OF THE NAVIGATION ACTS. In 1845 they were consolidated; in 1849 all foreign trade was thrown open to the vessels of all the world, and in 1853 the coastal traffic as well.

General Effect of Railways and Steamships. One of the important effects of the new means of communication was an alteration in the proportion between fixed and floating capital. It was no longer necessary for a manufacturer or a merchant to keep large stocks of raw material or of goods for sale. He could now trust to getting them to his need quickly, consequently he had a smaller proportion of his capital in this part of his business and so a relatively increased amount for the fixed capital of buildings and machinery. At the same time the invention of new and even more complex machinery tended in the same direction. This increase in fixed capital made it more difficult for a poor man to start and helped the growing division between capital and labour. Obviously also, the power to get quickly from place to place, and to communicate in a few hours over thousands of miles by telegraph, made possible those amalgamations and big businesses that were already becoming numerous.

Banking and Finance. The uncertainties of financial operations in times of rapid changes are shown by the successive crises that occurred between 1833 and 1870. In the 1836 drop in trade [1] the Bank of England saved the situation, and by 1838 things seemed normal. But a bad harvest came, and some ten millions of gold were exported to pay for corn, and soon after the Bank of France had to appeal to the Bank of England for a loan to prevent a run caused by panic due to the Bank of Belgium stopping payment. All this caused great depletion of reserves, but not foreseeing a storm the rate of discount was reduced, and a million of gold exported to America.

[1] See p. 550.

The drain of gold continued, and when the Bank tried to realize some of its securities it was unable to do so. Eventually the Bank of France came to the rescue and the danger was averted. During the crisis sixty-three country banks suspended payment.

These constant panics convinced the Government that something must be done, if possible, to steady things. Hence the BANK ACT OF 1844. Its chief provisions were:

1. The Bank of England was divided into two separate departments for issue and for banking. The issue department was allowed to issue notes to the value of £14,000,000 in securities, plus the value of the gold, silver, and bullion it held, handed over from the banking department beyond what it needed for current business.

2. As existing banks of issue ceased, the Bank of England was to inherit their power of issue up to two-thirds of the value.

3. All stamp duty on Bank of England notes was abolished, but the annual sum paid to the Government increased.

4. The Bank was required to give notes for standard gold at a fixed price on request.

5. Weekly accounts on a specified form to be issued.

As to country banks the Act ordered:

(*a*) That no new bank of issue was to be created, thus giving the Bank of England a prospective monopoly.

(*b*) The amount of issue of existing banks not to be increased.

(*c*) Country bank issues were not to be legal tender.

The next financial crisis came in 1847, again due to the depletion of the gold reserves. Famine had caused export of gold to buy corn, and the railway speculation reached its height in 1847, when £132,000,000 were invested in railways. The Bank did not raise its rate soon enough, and when its reserves got nearly exhausted, panic ensued, and people, fearing no more notes would be issued, began to hoard them and to make runs on the country banks. The Government promised to suspend the Act of 1844, and the mere knowledge that notes would be issued calmed the public and the crisis passed.

The 1857 panic, already referred to,[1] was mainly brought about in America. The gold discoveries had led to unbounded speculation. The increase of gold was prodigious; from 1493 to 1850 the average annual gold output was reckoned to be £1,800,000. From 1851 to 1860 it was £26,600,000. Prices

THE RUSH FOR THE GOLD REGIONS

rose somewhat, but most of the extra wealth went in speculative enterprises, especially in America in railways. The crash began with the failure of an Ohio insurance company for seven million dollars. There followed in the United States 5,123 failures. Panic in England succeeded, the Bank Act was again suspended, and this time an actual over-issue of two millions in notes was necessary, the only time up to 1914 when this has been the case.

It will be noticed that each crisis was due to over-confidence in the investing public and consequent speculation. The next was

[1] See p. 553.

in 1866, and was aggravated by a new system of financing ventures that had grown up. 'Suppose that a railway contractor wanted £50,000; he applied to a company, offering as security shares in the line he was constructing. The company agreed to lend him the amount, not in cash, but by acceptance made out in his favour; this acceptance the contractor could then discount, and thus obtain the money required. In this way profit was made by the loan of a signature only. The transaction was not analogous to the discount of a bill of exchange, for there were no goods delivered and sold, and requiring only an interval before being consumed; hence the distaste which bankers felt to accepting and circulating such paper.' [1] This had certain advantages of speed and ease, but was capable of much dishonesty and recklessness. The money market had been uncertain for some time. In 1861 America adopted an inconvertible paper currency which brought the gold to Europe and stimulated speculation. The cotton crisis had been serious and had forced fresh imports from Egypt, China, and Brazil,[2] and gold had to be sent until an increased export trade could grow up with these countries. All this disturbance helped speculation, and there was an enormous increase of limited liability companies, which had been fully established legally since 1862; 90 per cent. of those founded between 1862 and 1865 failed. When, in 1866, the great firm of Overend, Gurney & Co. was known to have been unsound since 1860 and now stopped payment, with liabilities of £18,700,000, panic ensued. In one day the Bank of England advanced £4,000,000; the total losses of the crisis were said to be £50,000,000. The Bank Act was suspended once more, and things calmed down.

These financial crises were all brought about by over-trading in one form or another, and the hopes that the Bank Act of 1844 would succeed in preventing them were not realized. The Bank, however, was able, and increasingly so as its directors gained more experience, to prevent the disasters taking the

[1] Andréades, *History of the Bank of England*, p. 355.
[2] See p. 558.

worst form. It was as the central reservoir of the banking of the whole country that the Bank of England became more and more important. The question of note issue in relation to currency waned in significance, for by 1874 the bulk of the business of the country was carried on by means of cheques and bills. Even in 1864, 96·8 per cent. of the payments in London were made in this way. This had been brought about by the somewhat selfish policy of the great Bank in maintaining its monopoly, and at the same time refusing to found branches in the provinces. Hence grew up the great joint-stock bank, which, deprived of the right to issue notes, built up a banking system on cheques, which became the common currency of the country. This was the general state of finance by 1874.

Summary. 1. The chief revolution of the time was in transit. In 1834 men moved at most at some ten miles an hour, and communicated over intervals of days or months. By 1874 a speed of forty miles an hour was common, and the telegraph had linked the ends of the earth by a bridge passable in an hour or so. In 1834 Englishmen wandered the seas at the mercy of wind and tide; in 1874, 'sure as the ferried barge they plied, 'twixt port and port'. India was nearer than Italy had been. The result was a complete reorganization of our trading system; capital turned over and earned its profits many times to the former once, all the earth was opening up as a source of raw material, all the nations became our markets. England, first in the field, set the pace, and it was one that almost staggered its makers. By 1874 the path was marked out, the speed was increasing, perhaps to a foreseeing eye the crash of forty years later was already inevitable.

2. The main feature of the change in commercial organization was the growth of the limited liability company. In the early days of the century the typical business was that of the one-man owner and director, the man who found the capital and who ran the trade was one. By 1874 this capitalist entrepreneur had been largely replaced by the joint-stock enterprise, where many men found the capital and shared the profits, while the

management fell to paid officials, who might or might not contribute to the capital, or share its gains. The war between the small business and the large had already begun.

3. Commerce became the gospel and the test of success in this first half of the Victorian Age, and we had no scruple in forcing it on reluctant peoples. So convinced were we that commercial prosperity and civilization were synonyms, that we believed we did well even if we forced trade at the gun's mouth. The Far East was successfully 'opened up', and British capital was poured out in a golden stream on less favoured lands. Railways, cotton factories, and the stokeholds of steamships were surely blessings that none should refuse, however great the price in morals or in beauty.

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4. The Chartists. Economic Theory. Government Measures.

It is now necessary to turn our attention to several matters that, of sufficient importance to demand fairly full treatment, do not come easily into the main stories of either agriculture, industry, or commerce, and yet concern them all. The first of these is an attempt at social revolution disguised as political reform.

The Chartist Movement. It is not quite possible to treat the story of Chartism along with the other economic theories of the time, because it combined action with theory, and, though it failed for the moment, did actually do something, not merely provide a reason for doing. The movement sprang from three tributary streams arising in the South, the Midlands, and the North, and these streams differed considerably in character.

The actual 'charter' was drawn up by the leaders of the London Working-Men's Association, a society founded in 1836 by a group of intellectual working-men, of whom the chief was William Lovett (1800–77). The result of the Reform Act of 1832 had been a great disillusionment to the manual workers.

THE TELEGRAPH. Before the introduction of the electric telegraph, a semaphore system had been employed. Exterior and Interior of the Telegraph House at New Cross, 1796. The next station on Shooter's Hill can be seen in the distance

They had taken their full share in the agitation for it, and its immediate results seemed to be the New Poor Law[1] and the trial of the Dorchester labourers.[2] The artisans were consequently filled with suspicion of bourgeois politics. The association discouraged middle-class members, laid great stress on education, and aimed at quality rather than quantity in its membership. Lovett was a Cornishman who had educated himself in the teeth of the greatest obstacles. Henry Hetherington (1792–1849), a compositor, and James Watson (1799–1874), a Yorkshireman and the son of working parents, were of the same kind. They were in fact a group of skilled artisans, who one hundred years later would have been caught young and turned into members of the intellectual professions by a system of scholarships. In 1838 Lovett drew up their programme, which became the Charter. On the face of it the Charter was purely political. The demands were: (1) universal male suffrage, (2) annual parliaments, (3) secret ballot, (4) equal electoral districts, (5) payment of members, (6) abolition of the property qualification for members. To us, who know the futility of even the most democratic machinery unsupported by social status or economic freedom, the faith of the men of the forties that such changes would produce a millennium is pathetic. We must remember that they had no experience to go on, and the Act of 1832 certainly seemed likely to put the middle classes in the saddle; why should not an extension of the franchise to all act in the same way for the poor? And they were right so far, that some such changes were an essential preliminary step to any effective assertion of the needs of the proletariate; but that they would be only the first steps of a long and toilsome uphill journey was, perhaps mercifully, hidden from them.

Meanwhile the advanced guard of the classes, to whom the 1832 Act had given the tools, were thinking it was time to use them, especially in view of the obvious misery and stagnation around them. In 1837 the BIRMINGHAM POLITICAL UNION, which had done so much in the reform agitation, was revived,

[1] See p. 578.

[2] See p. 384.

at the instigation of Thomas Attwood (1783–1856), a fanatic on the currency question, with the object of agitating against the gold standard. To attract working-class support they added universal suffrage to their programme, and called a great meeting at Newhall Hill, Birmingham, in August 1838. It was said that 200,000 assembled, and delegates were appointed to summon a convention and take measures for a national petition. This meeting, which was attended by representatives of the London Working-Men's Association and by leaders of the workers from the North, is regarded as the initial step in the movement.

The northern leaders, mentioned above, represent the third stream that went to form the river. The North was seething with agitation due to the misery we have depicted in Part VI, the most miserable and the most reckless being the hand-loom weavers, still struggling in hopeless rivalry with the power-factories. Their despair and their indignation alike centred round the New Poor Law, and so violent an agitation had been conducted for some time by Oastler and J. R. Stephens, that in whole areas it was impossible to put the law in force. To Oastler and Stephens came Fergus O'Connor (1794–1855), an Irishman of good birth with strong revolutionary traditions, who had been in the House (1833–4) as an Irish member. The London artisans would have none of him; they saw the superficiality of his thought, and distrusted his blustering volubility and reckless temperament. The more ignorant and more oppressed workers of the North, those of 'the unshorn chins, blistered hands, and fustian jackets' to whom O'Connor turned, welcomed him gladly, and he became the hero of the northern associations, and in 1838 their acknowledged leader. In 1837 he founded the *Northern Star*, a paper which reached at one time an issue of 45,000 and a circulation of at least ten times as many readers. For fifteen years this paper dominated the movement.

One other leader must be named, 'the schoolmaster of Chartism', James Bronterre O'Brien (1805–64), who by his various journals inspired the more thinking members of the movement.

Such was the triple origin of the Chartist movement, but the

Birmingham Political Union was soon swallowed up and its middle-class leaders dropped out. Neither London artisan nor sweated domestic worker of the North had any faith left for them.

In 1838 mass meetings all over the country elected a convention to meet in London to organize the agitation. It met in February 1839, sat for several months, removed to Birmingham and again to London, and effected nothing. It was, from the first, paralysed by dissensions, not as to aims but as to means. O'Connor and the northern leaders talked physical force, however much or little they meant of it. The Londoners, Lovett, Hetherington, Watson, and the rest, believed it neither necessary nor useful. Meanwhile, 1,200,000 signatures were obtained for a national petition, and Attwood and Fielden undertook to present it. But while the convention talked and quarrelled, the country was in ferment; there was panic in all the haunts of middle-class respectability, for outside London there was practically no police force (Bradford with 60,000 inhabitants had six constables). Fortunately Lord John Russell, at the Home Office, kept his head; still more fortunately he selected for the military command in the emergency Sir Charles Napier, who with his second, Colonel Wemyss, sympathized with the distress that was behind the agitation, and refused to be rushed by panic-stricken magistrates into repressive measures. Meetings were allowed as long as they were peaceable, and instead of making clear his power by shooting into harmless crowds, he demonstrated to the leaders both the forces he had at his disposal, and what modern artillery in the hands of a few men could do. Only in Birmingham was there a riot, due to police interference, and William Lovett was arrested for 'seditious libel' for signing a document stating the fact.

In July 1839 the petition was discussed in the House; its supporters, Attwood and Fielden, were not very effective; Disraeli used the opportunity to attack the Manchester School and attribute the existing misery to the displacement of a benevolent aristocracy by men with power and no recognized duties;

O'Connell opposed the petition, and it was refused by 235 to 46.

There followed an attempt to call a general strike, and a rising in Newport which failed; arrests of Chartist leaders to the number of over 400 followed. Sentences ranging from three months to transportation for life indicated the fears of property holders.

The collapse was pitiful but inevitable; the leaders were hopelessly divided as to methods; the rank and file trusted like sheep to the local men they knew, and wild, dispersed, and isolated efforts were bound to fail. The lack of organization was not altogether the fault of the leaders, for the Correspondence Acts were still in force, and all central control thereby illegal. Greater men might have failed under such conditions.

From 1840 to 1842 some sort of reorganization took place. The National Charter Association was established, an attempt at 'Christian Chartism' was made, and Lovett devised a wide scheme of education. Many of the mere talkers had been weeded out by the drastic action of the Government, and the physical force section was in abeyance. That the organization was improved was shown by the 2,000,000 signatures to the petition to save Frost, who led the Newport insurrection—more than the national petition itself had received. But on his release from prison, O'Connor rapidly made himself dictator of the movement and eliminated the better influence of O'Brien and Lovett. In 1842 another great petition signed by over 3,000,000 people was presented to the House. It was introduced by Duncombe and nominally supported by Roebuck, who, however, killed it by referring to O'Connor as a 'malignant and cowardly demagogue'. No support of the principles involved could counteract the admission implied, that the people who wanted votes could choose such a leader. Macaulay flung the power of his rhetoric against the threat to men of property involved in universal suffrage, and Lord John Russell and Peel followed on the beauties of our institutions and the greatness of our liberty and happiness. There were forty-nine supporters of the petition; Chartism had received its death-blow.

It struggled on, however, for another ten years or so. O'Connor initiated a preposterous land scheme which was only not fraudulent because O'Connor was as incapable of arithmetic as his deluded weavers, and in 1847 he was returned to Parliament. About the same time the leaders were in touch for the first time with continental revolutionaries. O'Connor had met Marx and Engels in Brussels in 1845; Mazzini was in England, and when in 1848 the news of falling dynasties throughout Europe reached England, the old flame flickered up in one last flare. Another petition, to be supported by mass meetings in London and elsewhere, was arranged; the Government, scared not so much by Chartism, as by the continental crash, organized an overwhelming display of strength; the middle classes enlisted in large numbers as special constables, and the big meeting on Kennington Common petered out. The petition, claimed to contain 2,000,000 signatures, was taken to the House, and on examination found to contain many false or mythical signatures. The roars of laughter that greeted the discovery may perhaps be forgiven as the hysteria of men suddenly relieved from panic.

Did Chartism fail, and if so, why? The answer is that its failure at the time in its ostensible objects was complete. The reasons are not far to seek. The division of its leaders on the question of methods was paralysing, and when the physical force party got control they either funked the last step or were so incompetent as to believe a universal rising could organize itself. No plans seem to have been made; to declare a general strike and take no measures to feed the people, to call on unarmed civilians to face trained soldiers in the open, to leave everything to chance, seem the proceedings of madmen. One cannot but suspect that O'Connor and his followers counted on threats to work the miracle, and their bluff being called showed an empty hand. Of his genuine sympathy with the outcast and the oppressed there is no doubt, of his power to inspire and lead still less, but he had neither knowledge of economics nor strategic gifts, and any cause he dominated was bound to fail.

But there is a sense in which Chartism did not fail. Its political

THE GREAT CHARTIST GATHERING TO PRESENT THE MONSTER PETITION

POLICE AWAITING THE PROCESSION IN HYDE PARK

dress was only its outside, the heart of the movement was social and economic. On that side the progress of the next fifty years was largely the work of men inspired both by the ideals and by the failure of the Chartists. The ideal claims of the under-dog, voiced by men like O'Brien and Lovett, have lived to the present day; the failure taught men to hasten slowly and to dig deep the foundation before building.

There can be little doubt that the whole Chartist agitation helped to bring about, too, those numerous inquiries into the condition of the workers undertaken by Parliament in the forties, inquiries that made possible the series of Factory Acts and the establishment of legal Trade Unions that have so profoundly bettered the condition of the manual worker.

Lastly, all the six points have by now been won, except annual parliaments, which it is seen would have more disadvantages than advantages. But a shortened period is already in existence, and it may be shorter yet.

Economic Theory from 1834 to 1874. We have called this a period of *laisser-faire* triumphant, and with justice, for it was the time when both in theory and practice the classical school of economics attained its maximum achievement. Of this school the one predominant figure is John Stuart Mill, and his life and work are of absorbing interest. Educated, along with his sisters, on a fantastic system by his father, James Mill, friend and devoted disciple of Bentham, at the age of 13 John Mill was holding his own in the society of Ricardo, Malthus, and Place, and at 23 was publishing essays on political economy. Nurtured on the pure milk of utilitarian doctrine, Mill, up to 1850, was the great exponent of orthodox economics. Of striking personality, master of a style that makes his book on logic easier to read than some novels, a man of moral pre-eminence even among the best of the Victorian age, his influence was enormous. Up to 1850 he summed up in himself and his books the best features of the time. Let us see what were the fundamental laws seemingly so successfully established.

1. *The law of self-interest.* All men desire well-being for them-

selves and their dependents, and so all seek wealth. Such seeking by all must in the end procure the welfare of all, even when interests apparently, though not really, clash.

2. *The law of competition.* In most cases it is therefore best to leave men free to compete with each other; competition if free enough will automatically bring justice. This was the liberal individualistic creed, which held that State interference was nearly always harmful. 'Every restriction of competition is an evil, every extension of it an ultimate good.' [1] The evils of the present system are due to too little, not too much competition.

3. *The law of population.* There can be no hope for the proletariate until they learn to restrict their numbers. So hopeless was the outlook on this side that Mill, the apostle of liberty, was even prepared to prohibit the marriage of those who have no prospect of supporting a family.

4. *The law of supply and demand.* This law was given a much more precise and accurate form by Mill, thus: Prices tend to oscillate about a definite point of equilibrium, the point at which supply and demand are equal. They rise and fall according as demand rises above and falls below supply.

5. *The law of wages.* This is best expressed by Cobden, who said 'that wages rose whenever two masters ran after the same man and fell whenever two men ran after the same master'. This 'iron law of wages' by which the worker is at the mercy of a fatalistic law of supply and demand, a law that no one can alter or ameliorate, was perhaps the crux on which the coming revolt turned. A theory which doomed the workers of the world to a mere fodder basis, with their only possible hope in a general refusal of their class to perpetuate slaves, was bound to be challenged by all who had any faith in a final destiny of good for mankind.

6. *The law of rent.* Ricardo's theory of rent was extended to cover other things than land, being by Mill defined as the share taken by any one who, by luck or skill, contrived to produce

[1] J. S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, Book IV, chap. 7, par. 7.

the same article at a less cost of capital and labour than his competitor.

7. *The law of international exchange.* That both parties gained by such exchange, just as they did by individual exchange, and the freer it was from control or interference the better.

These 'fundamental laws' were so firmly established in the minds of most of the people of the time and believed to be so incapable of challenge, that not only did Miss Martineau expound them for the young in the guise of tales, but *First Lessons in Political Economy for the use of Elementary Schools* was a serious publication of the time. Yet, even at the moment of its apparent triumphal completion, the whole edifice was being undermined, and by the hand of the man who had achieved its final synthesis. For Mill was full of a generous sympathy, especially for the oppressed of the earth, and by instinct could not help welcoming anything that might brighten the gloomy outlook offered to the bulk of humanity by the classical economists. Consequently we find in each successive edition of his book and in his later writings a modification and even a repudiation of much that he had at first believed. First of all he moved away from the position that economic 'laws' are immutable and as incapable of alteration by man as are the laws of physics. Especially in the distribution of products could man interfere. In 1866 he definitely abandoned the wages-fund theory, and eventually came to an attitude of mixed Socialism and individualism. His desire for individual liberty prevented his ever adopting a really socialistic programme, but he certainly cleared the way for others to do so. He advocated the abolition of wages and the establishment of co-operative production, a land-tax in order to socialize rent, and restriction of inherited wealth. That he proposed these measures in the name rather of individual liberty than of general social welfare does not diminish the debt which modern Socialism owes him. The breach in the wall of the Manchester School was large and permanent.

The Opposition. Moreover, in spite of the *débâcle* of Chartism and the general abandonment of Utopian dreams, there remained

several movements having a strong leaning towards social reform and an outspoken challenge to classical economics. Of these there were three starting from the Conservative group, and deriving from Coleridge, as well as a smaller group of Liberals who gradually departed from the pure doctrine of Benthamism.

The leaders of the Oxford movement, especially J. H. Newman, were definitely opposed to the current Liberal political economy, for they held that the pursuit of gain was the root of all evil, and not the moral source of improvement, virtue, and happiness. They held that if the 'economic man' existed, 'that being whom we were brought up to regard as causing the world to go round by making a bee-line to the best pay available',[1] he was a most undesirable product and incompatible with the high calling of a human soul, and the existence of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Young England Movement, of whom the most notable figures were Lord John Manners and Benjamin Disraeli, like the Oxford School, looked back longingly to a feudal age of a kind that existed only in their imaginations, when

> Each knew his place—king, peasant, peer or priest,
> The greatest owned connexion with the least;
> From rank to rank the generous feeling ran,
> And linked society as man to man.

All would be well if power and responsibility were remarried in the one person, for, given a responsible and benevolent aristocracy, they could cry,

> Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,
> But leave us still our old nobility.[2]

Conservatives, too, were the Christian Socialists who centred round Frederick Denison Maurice. 'Christian Socialism is the assertion of God's order,' said Maurice. A Christian communism was the ideal, but Maurice was no democrat, and believed kingship to be of divine origin. More inconsistent still, but powerful by means of a brilliant and popular pen, was Charles

[1] C. E. Montague, *Disenchantment*, p. 80.
[2] Lord John Manners, *England's Trust.*

Kingsley, poet, revolutionary, and conservative, so revolutionary that his *Yeast* and *Alton Locke* still ring a clarion call against vested interests, so little democratic that he was unable to address a Socialist lordling and omit his title, even in intimate letters. Kingsley, in fact, believed that the real battle of his time was the Church, the gentleman, and the workman against the shopkeeper and the Manchester School. This group, which contained also Tom Hughes, T. M. Ludlow, Vansittart Neale, and other men of intellect and power, had at least the merit, unlike the Oxford and Young England Schools, of looking forward and not backward. The group started several journals, but these failed; the beaten Chartist workmen of 1848 had no ears for parsons and gentlemen, however well-meaning. The movement turned off towards co-operation, sanitary reform, and the Working-Men's College. The last, with such teachers as Ruskin, Tyndall, Rossetti, Madox Brown, and J. R. Seeley, did not lack influence on the more intellectual of the working-men.

On the Liberal side there were men who, with J. S. Mill, were feeling their way slowly to a Socialist standpoint, but on the whole it is true to say that, while the disappointment of Chartism turned the working-class away from politics towards Trade Unionism and Co-operation, the middle-class reformer and some of the workers, convinced that slow reform must precede any possible triumph of labour, 'went into Gladstone's camp and refused to leave it either for the social Toryism of Benjamin Disraeli or for the social revolution of Karl Marx'.[1]

Although the life and work of Karl Marx falls within our period, it was not till after 1874 that his influence became increasingly important. All that concerns us here is his connexion with the foundation of the First International Association of Working-Men, founded in 1864. On September 28, 1864, a meeting of working-men of different nations was convened by George Odger and Randall Cremer in London, and Professor E. S. Beesley took the chair. The

[1] Beer, *History of British Socialism*, vol. ii, p. 191.

WORK, by Ford Madox Brown (1821–93), painted when he had come under the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites. By permission of the Manchester Corporation

principles and rules were formulated by Marx, the former in an *Address to Working Men.* In this he showed that 'the intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power is entirely confined to the propertied classes', he reviewed the history of the past thirty years, and ended with the trumpet call, 'Workmen of all countries, unite!' He 'advised the workmen to organize independent labour parties, to demand in Parliament social reform and factory legislation, to oppose all bellicose diplomacy, but to carry on a relentless class war, until they had conquered political power and nationalized the means of production'.[1] The I.W.M.A. held congresses in various European cities yearly till 1869, and then at The Hague in 1872, when it practically dissolved. The failure came from internal dissension; Marx and his followers believed in parliamentary social reform as the first objective, and this was especially so with the British section after the extension of the franchise in 1867, but on the Continent there was a strong contingent of Proudhonists, Owenites, and Anarchists, who had no faith in it, and desired to work entirely for social revolution. Marx's own ideas of the economic basis of history and the class war handicapped him in the argument, and the breach became too great. From 1872 until comparatively recent times, revolutionary Socialism had small hold on the British workman.

The Poor Law. In 1832 one of the first acts of the reformed Parliament was to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the working of the Poor Law. They immediately found themselves faced with a chaos of administrative muddle and legislative confusion. We have seen that under the stress of the changes wrought by enclosures and the new machinery the Poor Law of Elizabeth and its later amendments had completely broken down. By 1832 the bulk of the labouring population in rural areas was in receipt of relief as a supplement to wages, and the state of the towns was not much better. The Commission appointed assistants, who went all over the country collecting evidence, and this evidence was sifted and arranged by two men, Nassau

[1] Beer, *History of British Socialism*, vol. ii, p. 217.

Senior and Edwin Chadwick, to whose influence the reform that followed was mainly due. Nassau Senior had early convinced himself that there was no necessity for poor relief at all; that once the poor realized that they must work or starve, they would work; that, if they knew that old age could hope for nothing but what it had saved for itself, thrift would become almost universal. Later he modified these views in face of practical necessities, but held them still as an ideal. Edwin Chadwick (1801–90) came early under the influence of Bentham, and had acquired an almost fanatic belief in the power of scientific administration to cure all the ills of man. Above all he believed in the centralization of power in the hands of expert officials. It was under the inspiration of these two men, an inspiration that sprang directly from Bentham, that the report was written. The main points in it were:

1. Outdoor relief to the able-bodied was entirely evil.
2. Indoor relief was being atrociously mismanaged and the rates wasted on utterly depraved characters.
3. To help the aged or the orphan was to encourage neglect of family ties.
4. The general mixed workhouses, where they existed, were thoroughly bad, and that, in order to classify and segregate the classes, the unit of administration should be much larger than the parish.

The fundamental error made by the Commissioners was due to their concentration on what was undoubtedly the most conspicuous evil, the subsidizing of the rural labourer under the Speenhamland system. To meet this they recommended the plan of refusing outdoor relief to the able-bodied, and offering only relief in a workhouse. For this purpose alone it was a good plan, but the Commission seems to have ignored the question of the aged, the infirm, and the children, assuming the continuance of out-relief when possible in these cases, though they did definitely object to the general mixed workhouse, and contemplated the formation of units so large as to make possible

separate buildings and management for the various classes of inmates. They proposed to remove the habitual vagrant from the province of the magistrates and the constables, where the legislation of Elizabeth had left him, and transfer him to the control of the same authority as all other victims of destitution. It was an unfortunate proposal, and, to make matters worse, the problem of the vagrant in search of work and of the respectable unemployed, the displaced hand-loom weaver and the factory worker in times of bad trade, was not faced or apparently even considered.

The report was followed by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, an Act still in force and but slightly modified, ninety years later. Its chief clauses were as follows:

(*a*) The central control of poor relief was to be placed with three Commissioners appointed by the Crown, who were to have power to appoint a secretary and assistant commissioners. The latter were really inspectors. The three should control the whole administration and issue rules, orders, and regulations. General rules were to be laid before Parliament, and might be disallowed by Order in Council.

(*b*) Commissioners to have power to combine parishes in unions, and Boards of Guardians to be elected for the union by the parishes.

(*c*) Commissioners to have power to order the building of a workhouse with the consent of the majority of the guardians or of the ratepayers.

(*d*) Commissioners to make rules for the government of workhouses and to direct appointments and dismissals of officials.

(*e*) Commissioners to have power to prohibit out-relief to the able-bodied.

(*f*) Settlement by hiring and service abolished and removal made more difficult.

The Commissioners were appointed in the first place for five years, then yearly till 1842, and then for five years till 1847. In that year they were replaced by a Poor Law Board periodically renewed till 1867, when it was made permanent. The President

and Parliamentary Secretary of the Board held seats in the House, and thus the apparent irresponsibility of the Commissioners was avoided. In 1871 the Poor Law Board became the Local Government Board.

Driven by their secretary, the efficient if ruthless Edwin Chadwick, the triumvirate got speedily to work. The task they faced was colossal. There were 20,000 parishes in England, most of them objecting seriously to being merged in any union. There were vested interests of all kinds anxious to keep the *status quo*. Farmers who wanted cheap labour, landlords who wanted rents secured through the rates, shopkeepers afraid of losing custom, every labouring man in the country who saw his claim to 'work or maintenance' challenged, all together with many voices denounced the Act and the 'Three Kings of Somerset House'. But the reports of the assistant-commissioners offered ample justification for high-handed orders from the central authority. Corruption and abuse were everywhere; at Compton the bill for a pauper's marriage amounting to £6 16*s.* 2½*d.* was paid by the poor-rate; there was wholesale falsification of accounts; at Bulcamp three generations of paupers, all born in the workhouse and having had permanent home there for years, were happily living on the rates; on the other side the neglected condition of the infirm, the imbecile, and the lunatic was often indescribable. At the same time, here and there

A LUNATIC. Early in the nineteenth century.

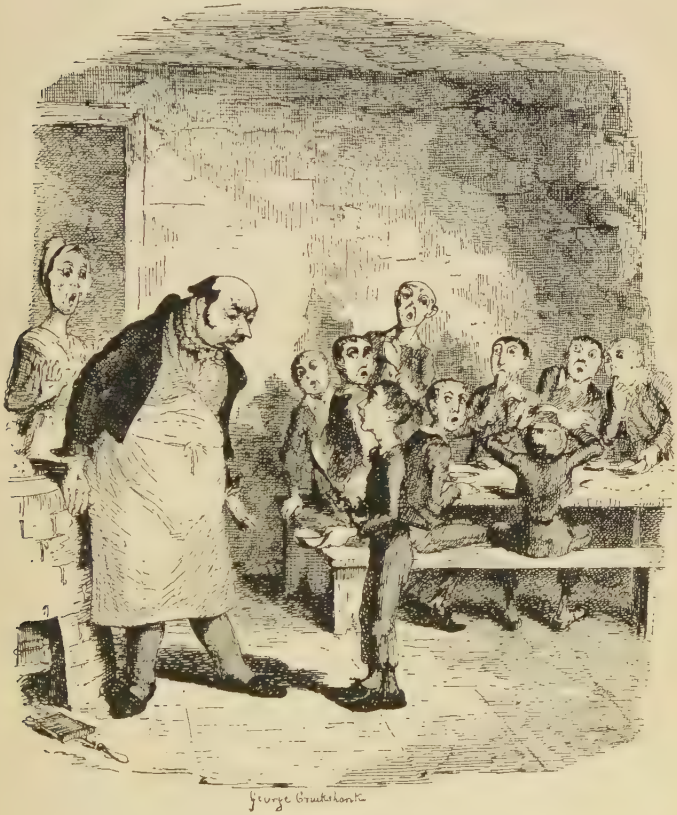
were instances that seemed to show that the assumption of firmness would result in getting rid of the pauper without undue suffering ; e. g. at Atcham an assistant overseer had prevented the adoption of the allowance system by refusing to supplement wages, but offering to pay the paupers to play marbles. The farmers gave way and paid full wages.

Let us look for a moment at the two main principles on which the reformers proceeded. These were (1) that the condition of the pauper should be generally ' less eligible ' than that of the lowest class of unaided workers, (2) that relief should only be given to the entirely destitute—it must be ' all or nothing '. At the very outset the carrying out of the first principle offered a difficulty. How, in view of the condition of the poorest industrial worker at the time, could the condition of the workhouse inmate be made worse ? It must have puzzled the most thoroughgoing Benthamite to feed, clothe, and house the pauper on a lower standard than the workers of Colne [1] and yet keep him alive. Less food and clothing being impossible—indeed more proved to be absolutely necessary—the Commissioners decided that the only thing to do was to make the workhouse ' less eligible ' by making it more unpleasant. A régime of harshness and discipline not greatly differing from that of a prison was therefore introduced, and earned for the workhouse the name of the ' Poor Man's Bastille '. In the words of the Commissioners themselves, ' The only expedient, therefore, which humanity permits is to subject the pauper to such a system of labour, discipline, and restraint as shall be sufficient to outweigh, in his estimation, the advantages which he derives from the bodily comforts which he enjoys '.

The second point of policy was justified on the ground that only so could you avoid helping those who did not need it. It was argued that Friendly Societies had found it necessary to draw a rigid line and refuse to recognize any illness but complete illness, so the Poor Law could not recognize poverty, only destitution. Unlike the Elizabethan organizers of poor relief,

[1] See p. 488.

who held that in poverty as in disease prevention is better than cure, the theorists of the nineteenth century were concerned



'OLIVER ASKING FOR MORE'

Charles Dickens's exposure of poor-law administration in *Oliver Twist* illustrated by George Cruikshank.

only to diminish official pauperism; that was their pigeon-hole, what happened to the pauper before and after his period of destitution was no concern of theirs.

Now these two theories, applied to the able-bodied labourer, more or less willing to work, did secure the end aimed at. For the most part he preferred to work, and the farmer at any rate had to raise his wages to a point at which the attractions of semi-starvation on wages were greater than fuller meals in the 'Bastille'. Even then it is doubtful if the depauperization of the rural areas would have attained the success so proudly claimed by the supporters of the Act, but for the new openings for work offered by the railways and the mines. So much for the able-bodied; what of the others, the aged, the infirm, the children, the lunatic, and the imbecile? For the most part they continued to receive out-relief, inadequate and unsupervised; where it was absolutely necessary they were received into the workhouse. It was at this point that the policy of the Poor Law Commissioners departed disastrously from that of the Commission of Inquiry. The latter had definitely ruled out the general mixed workhouse. They saw clearly that to mix together a crowd of people of all ages, sexes, and conditions merely because they could all be labelled destitute, was thoroughly evil. But in their anxiety to get workhouses built at all, the Poor Law Commissioners allowed guardians at first to do the cheapest thing, and build a general mixed workhouse. They soon discovered their mistake, too late; all their later efforts failed to induce the guardians to go to the expense of schools, infirmaries, and asylums, with workhouses standing half empty. It was of course impossible to treat all the classes properly, to invent a régime or collect a staff that should combine a deterrent discipline for the workshy, a school for the child, a nursery for the infant, an almshouse for the aged man and woman, not to mention nursing and medical attendance for the infectious, the lunatic, and the mother with a new-born baby. The result was pitiful for the sick and aged, a national disaster in the case of the child. In 1838 there were 42,767 children under 16 living in workhouses. Even when they did build schools, Poor Law Guardians proved quite incompetent to manage them, or to induce teachers to teach in them. In 1849 an outbreak of cholera

in a Poor Law school at Tooting carried off 180 out of 1,400 children.

Such was the great Act of 1834, about which philosophic Radicals and scientific administrators were prone to wax lyrical even down to the year 1900; let us see how far it achieved any of the aims of its promotors. In the rural areas, where alone it succeeded in being carried out, it was apparently successful in getting rid of able-bodied pauperism, and the Benthamites cried triumphantly, 'There, we always said there can be no such thing as surplus labour, and now we've proved it'. Modern investigators do not feel so sure of the proof, since other and abnormal factors were at work to provide a living for displaced agriculturists, and what they are sure of is the misery inflicted on thousands of helpless human beings, men, women, and little children, in the name of economic law. None, who know the minds of the poorest in the countryside, doubt that behind their hatred and terror of the 'house' lies a deadly experience and tradition of harshness and callous indifference. In the towns the opposition was keener and more successful. Any general order prohibiting outdoor relief to the able-bodied proved impracticable, owing to the intermittent employment due to fluctuating trade. So a labour test was substituted by which applicants for outdoor relief were forced to perform a task of labour, nearly useless in kind even when heavy in quantity. Since economic theory did not allow the labour of paupers to compete in the market with the produce of private enterprise, the work could not be productive, and was almost confined to oakum-picking and stone-breaking. Often it was a farce, but where really imposed it was a cruelty to the underfed textile worker and factory hand. In 1843 nearly 40,000 able-bodied men were employed in these 'labour yards'.

But the law which was cruel to the respectable poor, proved merciful to the habitual vagrant. He found the Poor Law Authority a milder master than the magistrate and the constable, and he cheerfully learnt to confine his applications to unions with a reputation for generosity. For the aim of the

original Commissioners to secure national uniformity failed utterly.

But even this modified deterrent practice met with the most strenuous opposition in the towns. There was serious rioting in Bradford and elsewhere, and it was many years before the industrial areas of Lancashire and Yorkshire fell into line. Fielden, the humanitarian manufacturer of Todmorden, succeeded for a time in preventing guardians being appointed or a rate collected in his union, and no workhouse was built there for thirty years. Oastler and J. R. Stephens used their fieriest eloquence to rouse the workers to resistance. At no time was the measure popular, but no one put forward an alternative scheme, except mad idealists and Socialists who refused to accept the economic theories of the age, and the new law was at least cheaper and less demoralizing than the practice that preceded. So the Commissioners became permanent, though they changed their name, the workhouse a recognized institution, and poverty, no matter how caused, a disgrace. But the efficiency dear to the soul of Edwin Chadwick was not obtained, and in 1865 Dickens could write as his solemn opinion, ' I believe there has been in England, since the days of the Stuarts, no law so infamously administered, no law so often openly violated, no law habitually so ill-supervised '.[1]

Some few additions were made to the law. In 1865 the union and not the parish was made the unit for chargeability, and in 1867 the care of the sick and insane in London was taken from the guardians and vested in a new board, the Metropolitan Asylums Board. At the same time the establishment of dispensaries and the combination of several unions into districts for the purpose of forming schools were authorized. In 1869 the Metropolitan Poor Law Authority was authorized to provide training ships.

Taxation. In Part VI we left the nation bearing perhaps its heaviest weight of taxation before 1914. From 1820 onwards there had been some remission, and under Huskisson's influence

[1] Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, postscript.

The Corn Laws.

By ALLEN DAVENPORT.
Author of all the Songs and Poems under the signature of Alpha.

Air.—"Auld Lang Syne."

Ye millions that so keenly feel
The pressure of the times,
To you I earnestly appeal,
Then listen to my rhymes,
In vain you labour night and day,
The owners of the soil,
By Corn Laws takes the bread away,
That should reward your toil.

CHORUS.

Then open every British port,
And let the poor be fed,
No longer see your children starve,
And die through want of bread.

The haughty possess the land,
And wield oppression's rod,
Inspite of that divine command,
Found in the word of God;
The Corn Laws petrify their hearts,
And make the nation groan,
For when the people cry for bread
They only get a stone.
Then open every, &c.

Down, down, with the starvation laws
And no more be beguiled,
Cheap bread must surely be the cause
Of woman, man, and child;
All property is insecure,
And insecure muts be,
Till they our plundered rights restore
And make the Corn Trade free.
Then open every, &c.

The Corn Laws are the greatest scourge
That has been since the flood,
Enacted since the time of George,
Whose reign was that of blood!
But we have now a Queen beloved,
Oh! let it not be said,
That she can see and hear unmoved,
Her people cry for bread.
Then open every, &c.

the changes had been in the direction of simplifying and reducing the tariff. Between 1830 and 1835 taxes to the amount of seven millions were repealed, and in 1836 there was a reduction in the tax on newspapers. North and Pitt had regarded newspapers as luxuries, a more modern spirit was developing that thought them essential to good citizenship.

After 1840 the story of taxation is largely the story of the fight for Free Trade, and of Peel's gradual conversion. The success of the new industries had been great, but they were handicapped by duties on their raw material, duties that the manufacturer did not consider balanced by protective tariffs on the finished article.

Besides he had one great difficulty, if England was to sell she must buy; no really flourishing trade can be founded on a one-sided commerce. Ships that take out textiles must bring back other cargoes or the freight costs of the textiles must be doubled. The obvious return cargoes would be food for the increasing numbers of the factory towns. Here came the bar of the Corn Laws, and when, in 1838, Cobden and others started the Anti-Corn Law League, after a short time during which it hung fire, it was taken up by the entire body of the new middle class. In the controversy that followed, the agricultural and the manufacturing interests were diametrically opposed. The latter claimed that the Corn Laws did not succeed in giving the farmers a high price, but only made possible a speculation that caused great fluctuations; that a flourishing return trade in corn would increase our trade in manufactures and indirectly our shipping; that if we took corn from other countries in return for manufactures there would be no incentive to them to start manufactures of their own which would in time rival ours; that cheaper corn at a stabilized price would relieve much of the current misery among the people. The land interest, on the other hand, declared that both landlords and farmers would be ruined; that to depend on sea-borne food in case of war was suicidal; that the manufacturers only wanted cheap food for their hands in order to reduce wages and increase profits. Such were the views of the

two interests directly involved; what were those of the workers, also indirectly concerned? Great efforts were made by the Anti-Corn Law League to enlist the manual workers, but the Chartists opposed them bitterly. Probably their fundamental reason was fear that the league might oust the Charter in the interest of the workmen and put cheap food before more vital reforms. Their openly stated reasons for opposition were: (1) the repeal would hand over the workers more than ever to the mercy of the manufacturers; (2) a ruined agriculture would mean unemployment to rural labourers; (3) that cheap food would only mean low wages, since the employee had no means of protection, for Trade Unions had failed and the Charter was not yet won; (4) low prices chiefly benefited not the wage-earner, but the man who lived on rent and interest; (5) lowered prices meant a great increase in the real as against the nominal value of the National Debt, and so would benefit fund-holders as against those who paid the interest on the debt, i. e. the tax-payer. The agitation in favour of Free Trade took eight years to succeed, a very short time in comparison with other movements, but it was helped both by chance and by the money and character of the men running it. The men behind it were the pushers of the new age produced by the industrial revolution, and they were rich and believed in spending money and in risking it for a sufficient object. Chance helped them by putting in power a man endowed supremely with the gift of gauging the temper of public opinion. Peel was never before or behind his age, and his working principle was to give the public what it wanted. Chance also threw in to help them famine on a large scale.

In 1842 Peel was feeling his way towards a modification of the protective tariff, and felt strong enough to reduce the number of articles that paid duty from 1,200 to 750. To balance the loss he imposed an income-tax of 7*d.* in the £ on incomes over £150. Farmers were assessed at half their rent, since no one could expect them to keep accounts and so know their profits. In 1845 another 450 articles were removed from the tariff, including glass, and all export duties abolished.

In that year the potato crop failed in Ireland and famine followed. It was impossible to refuse to bring corn supplies to their help, and as next year matters were worse, Peel proposed that the Corn Laws should be repealed by degrees, and by 1849 only a nominal duty of 1*s.* a quarter should remain. He also repealed other duties on food and raw materials. The split in the Conservative party and the long period of Whig government which followed are matters for political histories. Each year more taxes were repealed, the abominable window tax going in 1851.

In 1853 Gladstone began his series of budgets that left England entirely committed to Free Trade and the principle of taxation for revenue only. He continued the income-tax for seven years with the intention of gradually reducing it to 5*d.*, and he extended the legacy duties, taxing real and settled property equally with personal. Taxes on soap and on advertisements disappeared, and the tea duty was reduced. In 1854 he was faced with the question of paying for war, and decided not to borrow, but pay out of ordinary taxation. The income-tax was doubled and the duty on spirits and malt increased. But in 1855 a deficit of 23 millions was met by borrowing 19 millions, and by throwing the balance on income-tax, tea, coffee, and spirits; the 1856 deficit was entirely met by loan. Altogether in the five years of the Gladstone administration some 11 millions of taxes were lifted.

It will be seen that progress was being made towards the modern simplification by which the bulk of the revenue is raised by income-tax and property tax and duties on drinks.

In 1858 Disraeli made a move backward, took off the 'war ninepence' from the income-tax and borrowed to repay war loan. But in 1859 the Liberals were once more in power, and Gladstone raised the income-tax to 9*d.*, and in 1860 to 10*d.* Cobden negotiated a commercial treaty with France, and duties on her imports into this country were reduced. It was discovered that these reductions entailed no reduction in revenue, as the increased amount of trade balanced the

decreased rate of duty. After 1860 only 48 articles remained on the tariff.

The prosperity of the country caused surpluses in every budget from 1861 to 1865 and the income-tax went down to 4*d*., the tea duty to 6*d*.; 1866 was a year of disaster; there was the Overend and Gurney failure, the cattle plague, a Fenian revolt, a deficient harvest, and a strong reform agitation, but even then there was a surplus, which Disraeli allocated to debt reduction. The surpluses of 1869 and 1870 went to lessen taxation, though the National Debt was still over 700 millions. Between 1825 and 1870 the National Debt had only lessened from 800 to 737 millions, while taxation had decreased from £2 9*s*. 3*d*. per head to £1 18*s*. 5½*d*. In 1871 Lowe made a powerful appeal to the House to pay off some of the debt, and drew a picture of the remarkable prosperity of the times. Exports and imports were estimated at 860 millions. But the people thought otherwise; why bother to pay debt since everything was going so well? Obviously to so prosperous a people the debt charges on 800 millions were a mere flea-bite. The 4¾ million surplus, or what was left of it when the Alabama claims of 1½ million were paid, went to reduce sugar duty and income-tax. In 1874 the world went very well, and of course would continue to do so.

Summary. 1. Chartism was a movement that hoped to redress the grievances of the wage-earner by a series of political reforms. For some fifteen years it dominated the minds of the working classes and caused great fear among the rulers. It was led by divided counsels, especially on the question of force or persuasion as the better instrument, and when the advocates of the former prevailed their boasted strength proved a myth. The movement itself failed completely at the time, but its effect on the history of the next half-century was profound, both as an inspiration and as a warning.

2. Throughout the period the classical economic theories based on the beauty of unlimited competition held the field, and were formulated and consolidated by J. S. Mill. They did not, how-

ever, go unchallenged, and Mill himself towards the end was abandoning several of them. The High Church Movement, the new Conservative Movement, and the Christian Socialists, all in differing ways denied either the premises or the conclusions or both, in the name of humanity or religion. International Socialism made, under Karl Marx, its first attempt to link the workers of the world against their oppressors; it failed.

3. The great reform of the Poor Law was begun in 1834. Its principles were very different from those of the original law of Elizabeth, for its authors believed they could abolish pauperism if they sufficiently ignored its existence. The claim to work or maintenance, implicit in the original law, was denied, and poverty, whether the result of ill chance or ill behaviour, was penalized as a crime. The Elizabethan attempt to distinguish between the professional vagabond and the victim of trade depression was abandoned, and the abuses of an undiscriminating assistance were made the excuse for a refusal of any except under penal conditions. The women, the children, and the incapable were left much as they had been before, with the accumulated abuses of two centuries unreformed, even unrecognized.

4. The great revolutions of this period were in commerce, viz. in communications and in taxation; it was the era of the triumph of Free Trade. The agitation began in the thirties, the principle was admitted in the forties, and the whole reorganization completed in the sixties. England was committed to 'taxation for revenue only'. It was the natural corollary of the *laisser-faire* principles; for the first time in English history Government removed its controlling hand from the doors of trade, and London became the exchange mart of the world's commerce. Only a little was done to reduce the National Debt, which still stood at over 700 millions.

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GENERAL INDEX

Abbesses, 171.
Abbot of Battle, 163.
Absentee Vicars, 444.
Accrington, 488.
African Companies, 286.
Agricultural labourers, 474; attacks on, 319; Union of, 451.
— Societies, 322.
Agricultural Society, Royal, 471.
Agriculture, Board of, 314, 413.
Agriculture in the eighteenth century, 275; in 1834, 467–70.
Ale, 10, 141.
Aliens, 25, 74, 84, 85, 86, 121, 149, 197, 212–15, 281–2.
Allan, William, 510.
Allotments, 473, 478; for poor, 312.
America, 392.
American Civil War, 545, 554.
Ancient customs, 92.
— demesne, 54.
Antwerp, 224, 225, 236.
Applegarth, Robert, 512.
Apprentices, 376.
—, limitation of, 200, 248.
—, Statute of, 248; repealed, 376.
Apprenticeship, 63, 69.
Appropriated churches, 163.
Arbitration, 377, 518.
— by Gilds, 61, 66.
Arch, Joseph, 480–2.
Argand burner, 497.
Aristocracy, 432.
Arkwright, Richard, 338, 342, 385, 411.
Army, 29, 145, 421; disbanding of, 363, 432.
Artificers, Statute of, 248.
Ashley, Lord (Earl of Shaftesbury), 373, 479, 487, 502, 557.
Assemblies, treatment of, 420–4.
Assize of bread and ale, 57, 58, 72; of arms, 90; of cloth, 124.
Associated Employers, National Federation of, 518.
Association for Protection of Labour, 383.
Attwood, Thomas, 567, 568.
Auditors, 39, 48.
Aulnage, 123–4.
Austria, 394.
Aylesbury, 314
Aylsham, 73.

Bacon, Francis, 157.
Bailiff, 38.
Bakewell, Robert, 320.
Baking, 72.
Balks, 5.
Bank Act, of 1833, 410; of 1844, 560; suspended, 554, 561, 562.
— failures, 326.
Bank of England, 96, 299–300, 326, 406, 410, 550, 559–60.
Bank Restriction Act, 408.
Banking, 299–300, 318, 406–10, 559–63.
Bardi, the, 144–5.
Barracks, 422.
Barrett, Elizabeth, 487.
Bawtry, 400.
Bayley, Justice, 388.
Beasts, weight of, 322.
Bedford, Duke of, 536.
Beer (in Devon), 72.
Beesley, E. S., 514, 576.
Beggars, 257.
Bentham, 454, 486, 574.
Berkeley, family of, 113.
Berkshire, 424, 425.
Berlin Decrees, 394.
Berthollet, 346.
Bessemer, Henry, 494, 554.
Bethlehem Hospital, 256.
Bilston, 505.
Birmingham, in 1750, 333; without franchise, 434; steel in, 495; workshops in, 504, 510; growth of, 524, 526, 528–9; Chartist Convention in, 568.
Birmingham Political Union, 566, 568.
Birth Rate, rise of, 319, 330, 362, 450.

Births, registration of, 497.
Bishops, 159, 161–2.
Bishton, J., 435.
Blackburn List, 511.
Black Death, the, 102 ff., 145, 165.
Bleaching industry, 346, 503.
Blockade, 394.
Boc-land, 17.
Book of Orders, 246.
Bookbinders, 508.
Bombay, 549.
Boon-work, 6, 34.
Bordars, 6.
Bordeaux, 156.
Borough Court, 53, 55.
Boroughs, 443.
—, in Domesday, 19; in eleventh century, 21; organization of, 56.
Bot, 28.
Bounties, 288, 291, 294.
Box, 72.
Bradford, 489, 555.
Bradford-on-Avon, 333.
Brass-making, 213.
Brazil, 558.
Bretigny, Treaty of, 146.
Brewers' Company, 141, 206.
Brewing, 72.
Bricks, 140.
Bridewell, 256.
Bridges, 50, 80.
Bridgewater, Duke of, 401.
Bridgnorth, 402.
Brindley, James, 401.
Bristol, 19, 24, 57, 58, 122, 124, 404, 524, 526.
British and Foreign Schools Society, 440.
Brontë, Charlotte, 380.
Brougham, 388, 440.
Brown, Madox, 576.
Bruges, 83, 224.
Brunel, 546–7.
Brunswick, 85.
Buckingham, Duke of, 314, 434.
Buckinghamshire, 314.
Budd, J. P., 492.
Builders' Union, 383.
Building, 72.
Bull, G. S., 373.
Bullion, 99, 157, 227–8.
— Committee, 409.
Burgesses, 19, 22.
Burgundy, Duchess of, 155.
Burial fees, 170.
Burke, 442.
Burnley, 485.
Burt, Thomas, 516.
Burton, Abbot of, 35.
Bury St. Edmunds, 56.
'Business' methods, in sixteenth century, 210.
Business morality, 58.
Butties, 352.
Byron, 442.

Cables, 550.
Cabot, Sebastian, 218.
Calais, 143, 554.
California, gold in, 471.
Calvin, John, 208.
Cambridge, 79.
Cambridgeshire, 332.
Canal shares, 536.
Canals, 287–8, 401–3, 535, 544–5.
Cannel coal, 496.
Cannon, 139.
Canons, 159, 162.
Canynge, William, 131.
Capital, invested abroad, 397; proportion of fixed to floating, 559.
— levy, 90, 462.
Capitalism, 127, 282, 518–20; before 1770, 336.
Capitalists, 196, 199.
Carlyle, Thomas, 487.
Carpenters, Amalgamated Society of, 512.
Carta Mercatoria, 85, 92.
Cartwright, William, 340, 343, 390.
Cast-iron, 352.
Castles, 17.
Cathedrals, 162.
Cattle, import of, 292; new breeds of, 322.
— plague, 472.
Caursines, 75.
Cecil, Lord Burghley, 222.
Cementation, 352.
Ceorls, 13, 16.
Chadwick, Edwin, 579, 580.
Chaff-cutters, 470.
Chancellor of the Exchequer, 95.
Charity, 331, 440.
Charters to towns, 53.
Chartism, 564–73, 576.
Chartists, 488, 576, 588.
Check-weighers, 352.
Chemical manures, 470.

Chemistry, agricultural, 322, 470.
Cheques, 410, 563.
Cheshire, 385, 439, 500, 503.
Chevage, 175.
Children, 206–7; effect of Industrial Revolution on, 363–6; hours of, 436; in factories, 338, 500–4; in mines, 368; pauper, 364, 584; in agriculture, 474–6.
Chimney-sweeps, 368–70.
China, 79, 556–7.
Chlorine, discovery of, 346.
Christian Socialists, 520, 575.
Christ's Hospital, 256.
Church, the, 3, 158–73, 443–5.
— ales, 170.
— building, 169.
— lands, 159.
Churchwardens, 169.
Cinque Ports, 146.
Clearing House, 410.
Clergy, the, 161–2, 164.
Clerks of the Market, 53, 55.
Cleveland district, 492.
Clipper ships, 545.
Cloth, import of, 122.
Cloth Markets, 124–5.
Clothes, 46.
Clothworkers' Company, 196.
Clubs, Benefit, 378.
Coaching, 398.
Coal, 25, 70, 139, 215, 280, 287, 346–52, 488–90; used to decarbonize iron, 354.
Coal-mines, Commission on, 490; ventilation of, 346–8.
Cobbett, William, 426–8, 478.
Cobden, Richard, 573, 588, 590.
Cockayne Scheme, 251.
Coinage, 97, 99, 183, 185–6, 264, 301, 410.
Coke, Thomas, 322.
Coket, 93.
Colbert, 292.
Colchester, 22, 212.
Coleridge, 454, 575.
Colne, 488.
Cologne, 85.
Colombus, 217.
Coloni, 14.
Colonies, 229–35, 296–8.
Combination Acts, 377–8, 415, 438; repeal of, 380–2.
Combination of workers, 105, 199; laws against, 244, 282.
Commercial ideals in sixteenth century, 229.
Commissions; for enclosure, 312, 473; on coal-mines, 490; on employment of women and children in mines, 498; on truck, 505; on railways, 542.
Committee on railways, 542; on navvies, 543.
Commons, 43, 117, 179, 268; loss of common rights, 317.
Communism, 455.
Commutation of service rents, 101, 108, 110, 115.
Competition, mediaeval objection to, 23, 35.
Compound engine, 548.
Condy, George, 374.
Confirmatio Cartarum, 92.
Conspiracy laws, 377.
Continental System, 394.
Convocation, 165.
Co-operation, 520–4, 576.
Co-operative Society, London, 456.
— Wholesale Society, 522.
— workshops, 520.
Copper for ships, 403.
Copyholders, 113, 176, 185, 270, 272, 317, 331.
Cordwainers, 72.
Corfe, 72.
Corn, 85, 178, 291.
— Laws: Tudor period, 245–7, 291–2; of 1804: 324, 413–15, 471; repeal of, 477, 589.
Corn Law League, Anti-, 588.
Cornwall, 311, 490.
Correction, Houses of, 258, 259, 262.
Correspondence Act, 455, 569.
Corresponding Society, 454.
Cort, 354.
Cortez, 218.
Cottagers, 317, 318.
Cottages, must have four acres, 258.
Cotters, 6, 32, 51.
Cotton, 212, 280, 344–6, 489.
— industry, 519, 554, 558.
— operatives, 517.
Cotton-spinners, 507, 509, 511.
Coulson, Edwin, 512.
Court Rolls, 111.
Courts: in boroughs, 52, 53; manorial, 40, 52; of Pie-Powder, 79.
Coventry, 459.

Craft Gilds, 62 ff., 76.
Cranfield, Lionel, 250, 263.
Cremer, Randall, 576.
Criminal Law Amendment Act, 516.
Crompton, Henry, 514.
—, Samuel, 338, 342.
Cromwell, Thomas, 243.
Crumpsall, 522.
Crusades, 89.
Crypto-Jews, 213.
Cumberland, 494.
Cunard Line, 546.
Currency, 326; depreciation of, 407.
Curwen, 418.
Custom, 35; 'of the Manor,' 176–7, 185; 'of London,' 200.
Customary Tenants, 175.
Customers, 93.
Customs, 91, 122–3, 263, 270, 302.
Cutlery, 213.

Dairy farming, 472.
Danegeld, 28.
Danes, 20, 24.
Dangerous trades, 504.
Danish settlement, 13, 15.
Dantzic, 85, 150, 152.
Darlington–Stockton Railway, 534.
Davy, Sir Humphry, 322, 348.
Davy lamp, 490.
Debts: collection by gilds, 60; of the Crown, 98.
Demesne, 6, 102, 117.
—, Royal, 302.
Denmark, 394.
Depreciation of currency, 407.
Derby, 492.
Derbyshire, 352, 503.
Devon, 311.
Deye, the, 39.
Dickens, Charles, 428, 586.
Diet of agricultural labourers, 330–1.
Direct Taxes, 462.
Disraeli, Benjamin, 428, 568, 575, 576, 590.
Docks, 404, 549–50.
Doherty, John, 371, 379.
Domesday Book, 1, 16, 26, 29, 45.
— Commissioners, 1.
Domestic system, the, 130, 198.
Dorchester labourers, 383–5.
Dordrecht, 83.
Dorset, 425, 478, 479.
Dove, 402.
Dower, 18.
Drainage, 468.
Drake, Francis, 220, 222, 223.
Drink trade, 528.
Duncombe, 569.
Dunwich, 434.
Durham, 332, 489, 492, 519.
Dutch, the, 226, 227, 233, 252.
Dyeing, 346, 489, 503.

East Anglia, 197.
East India Company, 226–9, 284–6, 294, 556.
Eastland Company, 225, 283.
Economic Man, The, 575.
Economics, 446–56, 572–8.
Education, 439–40, 480, 498, 508, 522.
— Acts, 476.
Edward I, 75.
Edward III, 121.
Egypt, 345, 558.
Elizabeth, 222.
Elleker, Thomas, 386.
Ellicott, Bishop, 481.
Ellis, 314.
Emigration, 232, 481.
Employers and Workmen's Act, 517.
Employers, bad faith of, 377; difficulties of, 377; rings of, 378.
Enclosure, processes and results of, 102, 116 ff., 178–81, 241–4, 267, 311–20, 472–4; Acts against, 242; advocates of, 318, 322; by mutual agreement, 312; claims in writing, 312; consent of landowners necessary, 312; effect on production, 315; expenses of, 312, 314; effect on rents, 316; effect on people, 317–20; notice of, 312; petitions against, 312; reasons for, 314–15.
Enclosure Acts, 314, 412–13, 444, 462, 472, 473, 478, 479.
Engels, 570.
Engineers, 518.
—, Amalgamated Society of, 509–10.
Essex, 425.
Evangelicalism, 445.
Ewes milked, 44, 181.
Exchequer, the, 93–6.
Exchequer Bills, 408.
Excise, 302.
Exeter, 20, 22.
Exhibition of 1851, 489, 552.
Exports, 397, 556–9.

Factory Acts, 455, 487, 497–506; of 1802, 365, 371–2; of 1816, 365; of 1825 and 1831, 372; of 1833, 373, 497; of 1844, 500; of 1874, 505.
Fairs, 23, 24, 28, 46, 78, 143, 168.
Faraday, Michael, 490.
Farm, a night's, 27.
Farmers, 272.
Farming, in eleventh century, 9; in fourteenth century, 40; production of acre, 41; capital needed, 48; improvements in, 320–3.
Fee farm, 54.
Feltmakers, 201–2, 282.
Fencing of machinery, 503.
Feudal dues, 27, 36, 264, 270.
— host, 30.
— system, decline of, 188.
Field systems, two- and three-field, 4, 9, 10, 15; Celtic, 15; of Kent, 16.
Fielden, John, 366, 374, 502, 568, 586.
Fielding, Henry, 415.
Fifteenths and tenths, 263.
Fines of Courts, 22, 37; on inheritance, 118, 176.
Firma Burgi, 53.
First-fruits, 264.
Fishing trade, 81.
Fitzherbert, 180.
Flanders, 80, 85, 120, 144, 150, 153, 196.
Fleming, Samuel, 388.
Flemish, the, 74, 79.
Flint-glass makers, 508, 509.
Florence, 86, 145, 156.
Flying-shuttle, date of introduction of, 355.
Fodder, 12.
Foil, of tallies, 96.
Fold-worthy tenants, 7.
Food, 44.
Foot-and-mouth disease, 472.
Forbes, Archibald, 480.
Forestallers, 58.
Fox, Charles James, 418, 422, 438, 439.
Frame-knitting, 519.
France, 85, 395.
Franchise Acts, 175.
Franco-Prussian War, 554.
Frank-almoign, 37, 80.
Frankpledge, view of, 49.
Freedom, English, 442.
Freeholders, 113, 174, 185, 272, 317, 473.
Freemen, 6; tenure of, 7; outside the manor, 8; effect of Norman Conquest on, 16, 34, 35–6.
Free-trade, 221, 477, 488, 489, 586–9.
French, 79.
Friendly Societies, 378.
Friendly Societies Act, 514.
Fuel, 12.
Furlong, 5.
Fyrd, 29.

Galleasse, the, 236.
Galleon, the, 237, 238.
Galleys, 235.
Game laws, 415–18.
Gang system, 475.
Gangs, 328.
Gangs Act, 476.
Gascony, 85.
Gas Light & Coke Co., 496.
Gavelkind, 45.
Genoa, 150, 153, 225.
Genoese, the, 79, 87.
German miners, 74; merchants, 85.
— Legion, the, 422.
Gig-mills, 355, 386.
Gilbertine order, 172.
Gilbert's Act, 418.
Gilds, 51 ff.; merchant, 59 ff.; and municipalities, 61; religious functions of, 63; gate to burgess right, 65; supervision by, 65; ordinances, 67, 247; decay of, 129, 132–5; of journeymen, 134; religious, 138, 189; of London, 182; and livery companies, 198 ff.
Gladstone, W. E., 542, 543, 557, 576, 589–90.
Glasgow, 404, 507.
Glass, 140.
— industry, 504.
Glebe land, 164.
Gloucester, 314, 524.
Gloucester, Isabel, Countess of, 28.
Gloucestershire, 355, 475.
God's silver, 81.
Godwin, 454.

Gold, discovery of, 471, 561; import of, 397; payment, suspension of, 326.
— standard adopted, 410.
Golden age of farming, 467.
Goldsmith, Oliver, 320.
Granaries, 182.
Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, 383–5.
Grand Trunk Canal, 402.
Grant, Philip, 374.
Great Eastern steamship, 548.
Greeks, 79.
Gresham, Thomas, 225, 264.
Grey, Charles, second Earl, 426, 438.
Grey, Thomas, 540.
Grindcobbe, William, 110.
Grossetête, Robert, 47.
Guano, 470.
Guile, Daniel, 512.

Habeas Corpus Act, 379, 420, 426.
Haberdashers, 201–2.
Half-time system, 501.
Hall, Charles, 454.
—, J., 354.
Hamburg, 85, 152.
Hammersmith, 333.
Hammond, J. L. and Barbara, 390.
Hampshire, 424, 425, 478.
Hanse, the Flemish, 85.
—, the Teutonic, 79, 85, 149, 156, 214.
Hardware, 504.
Hardy, Thomas, 457.
Hargreaves, 338, 342.
Harrison, Frederic, 514.
Harvesting, 41–2.
Haverfordwest, 74.
Hawkins, John, 220, 222.
—, William, 219.
Health, Committee on, 523.
Hearth-tax, 302.
Heath, 492.
Hedging, 318.
Henry VII, commercial policy of, 153.
Henson, Gravener, 379, 387.
Hepburn, Thomas, 379.
Heriot, 112.
Hetherington, Henry, 566.
Hidage, 29.
Hild, Abbess, 171.
Hobhouse, Benjamin, 378.
Hodgskin, 454.
Holland, Lord, 378, 426, 439.
Homage, performed by women, 18.
Honey, 44.
Hong-Kong, 556.
Honours, 37, 93.
Hops, 10.
Horner, Leonard, 503.
Hosiery, 504.
Hospitals, 166, 256.
Hostmen of Newcastle, 281.
Hours of work, 359, 368.
Housing, 528.
Howick, Lord, 502.
Hudson Bay Company, 286.
Hughes, Tom, 514, 576.
Hull, 400, 402, 403.
Hume, Joseph, 381–2.
Hundred Court, 49.
Hunt, Henry, 423–4.
Huntsman's steel process, 352.
Huscarles, 29.
Huskisson, W., 381, 397, 586.

Iceland, 81, 152.
Implements of farming, 468–9.
Imports, exclusion of, 203; growth of, 397, 556–9.
Income-tax, 396, 460–1, 589, 590.
Indemnity to Germany, 554.
India, 558.
Indirect taxation, 462.
Industries, in eleventh century, 25; interdependence of, 344.
Ine, 20.
Inspection of coal mines, 490.
Inspectors, Factory, 497, 498, 500, 505.
Insurance, 288–9.
Intercursus Magnus, 155.
Interest, 75.
International Association of Working Men, 576.
International Postal Convention, 550.
Invasion, fears of, 409.
Inventions, 337–44.
Ireland, 85, 230, 233–4, 298, 362.
Iron, 9, 25, 45, 70, 139, 215, 280, 352–5, 487, 490–5; use of hot-blast in manufacture of, 354; increase in production of, 355; for ships, 404, 546–7.
'Iron law of wages', 573.
Ironbridge, 354.
Ironclads, 495.

Jack of Newbury, 128.
Jacquard, Joseph, 343.
Japan, 557.
Jews, 74, 75, 213.
John, King, 28.
Joint-stock enterprises, 200 ff., 204, 223, 228, 283, 410, 411, 448, 519, 554–6.
— Banks, 409–10.
Journeyman Gilds, 134.
Journeymen, 196.
Journeys in fourteenth century, 81.
Jude, Martin, 509.
Junta, the, 512, 514.
Jurisdiction, 28.
'Just price', 58, 60.
Justices of the Peace, 106, 247, 253, 271, 328–9, 434, 458.

Kay, John, 279, 280.
Kempe, John, 121.
Kennedy, Inspector of Factories, 500.
Kensington, 333.
Kent, 424.
Ket's Rebellion, 192, 243.
King, Gregory, 268.
Kingsley, Charles, 428, 478, 575–6.
Knitters, framework, 282–3.

Labour questions, 138–9.
— rents, 6, 102.
—, the measure of value, 453.
Labour-rate System, 328.
Lace industry, 503, 519.
Lady of Mercia, 20.
Laisser-faire, 447–8, 453, 456–8, 486–7.
Lancashire, 344–6, 388, 439, 500, 503, 519, 523.
Land, price of, 332.
Landlords of sixteenth century, 190–1.
Landowners in eighteenth century, 269.
Land-tax, 303, 304.
Lassalle, 453.
Law merchant, 78.
'Law of Nature', 454.
Lawyers, 317.
Lead, 25, 71, 140.
— miners, 360.
Leases, 114, 115; stock and land, 116.
Leathermakers, 25, 72, 201.
Lebon, 496.
Leeds, 360, 402, 526.
Leeds Mercury, The, 373.
Leek, 505.
Legacy duties, 590.
Leicester, 337, 505, 530.
Lepers, 166, 168.
Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 548.
Levant Company, the, 226.
Lewes, 73.
Libelle of English Policie, 147.
Lichfield, 402.
Lichfield, Earl of, 516.
Liebig, 470.
Lighthouses, 288.
Limited Liability Companies, 411, 554–6, 562.
Linen, 73, 280.
Lisbon, 156.
Liverpool, 398, 401, 402, 403, 404, 529; shipwrights of, 442.
Liverpool and Manchester Railway, 535.
Livery and Livery Companies, 132–4, 196.
Local Government Board, 580.
Locke, John, 454.
Lombards, 144.
London, in eleventh century, 19; no sheriff in, 22; mint in, 22, 24; no merchant gild in, 59, 61; rights at fairs, 78; weavers' gilds in, 120; aliens in, 122; population of, 182; trade of, in sixteenth century, 182; in sixteenth century, 196; overcrowding in, 198; food for, 246; canals, 403; postal service and docks, 404; development of, 524.
London and Westminster Bank, 410.
London Working Men's Association, 564.
Londonderry, Lord, 507.
Long leases, 323.
Lonsdale, Lord, 434.
Lord-Lieutenant, office of, 434.
Lord of the Manor, 3, 6, 36, 52.
Lovett, William, 564, 568, 569, 572.
Lowe, Robert, 591.
Lübeck, 85.
Luckpenny, 81.
Luddites, 386–7, 422.
Ludlow, T. M., 576.
Luther, 208.

Lynches, 5.
Lynn, 182.
Lyons, 554.

Macaulay, T. B., 358, 569.
Macclesfield, 359, 459.
Macdonald, Alexander, 516, 517.
Machine-makers, 508.
Machinery, attacks on, 385; slow progress in woollen industry, 355.
Machines, invention of, 337–44.
— for agriculture, 469–78.
Magellan, 218.
Magistrates, 365, 501; fixing wages by, 376.
Malthus, T. R., 450–2.
Malting prohibited, 247.
Maltolte, 91–2.
Malus intercursus, 156.
Manchester, 333, 359, 398, 401–2, 423, 434, 442, 512, 523, 526, 529, 552.
Manners, Lord John, 575.
Manor, the, 7, 8, 12–16, 32 ff., 40, 107.
—, Lord of the, 311, 312.
Manorial officials, 37–8.
Manures, 322, 470.
Mariner's compass first used, 152.
Mark, the 'Free', 14.
—, value of the, 98.
Markets, 23, 28; tolls of, 52; in thirteenth century, 77; clerks of, 52, 246.
Marlborough, Duke of, 479, 481.
Marlborough, Statute of, 18.
Marling, 320.
Marriage, 27, 37.
Marshall, William, 314.
Martineau, Harriet, 574.
Marx, Karl, 570, 576, 578.
Marylebone, 333.
Master and Servant Act, 513.
Maurice, Frederick Denison, 575.
May Fair, 168.
Mayors, 54, 56.
Mazzini, 570.
Meadows, 10, 42.
McAdam, 398.
McCulloch, 381.
Melbourne, Lord, 425, 426.
Mercantilist system, 147, 211, 397; Adam Smith on the, 448.
Mercenaries, 29, 30, 74.
Merchant Adventurers, 123, 150, 214, 224, 229, 252.
— Gild, 54, 59 ff., 61, 76.
— law, 78.
Merchant-ships, 235–8.
Merchants as thegns, 24.
—, petition of the, 397.
Merchet, 35, 112, 175.
Mersey, 402.
Merton, Statute of, 102.
Metal-workers, 72, 140.
Methodists, 445.
Methuen Treaty, 292–3.
Metropolitan Asylums Board, 586.
Middleborough, 530.
Middle class, rise of, 119.
Middlemen, 58, 72.
Military service, 36–7.
Militia, 422.
Mill, J. S., 572–4, 576.
Mill, the, 3, 22, 39, 52.
Mill-stones, 9, 45.
Miners, 360, 377.
—, lead, 360.
—, National Union of, 517.
Mines, Commission of 1842 on, 368, 498; conditions in, 349, 366–8.
Mines and Collieries Act, 498.
Mines Regulation Act, 517.
Mines, School of, 490.
Minimum wage, 328, 380, 438.
Mining, 519.
Minton, 504.
Mints, 22.
Monasteries, 13, 162–4, 171; as feudal tenants, 37; vineyards in, 45; as landlords, 164; dissolution of, 172, 189.
Money, 98; paper, 326.
Monopolies, 200 ff., 202–4.
More, Hannah, 440.
—, Sir Thomas, 180.
Mule, self-acting, 340.
Mule-spinning, 338.
Mülhausen, 554.
Municipal hospitals, 168.
Municipalities Act, 526.
Murdoch, William, 496.
Muscovy Company, 226, 229, 284.
Mystery plays, 132.

Nankin, Treaty of, 556.
Nantes, Edict of, 281.
Napier, Sir Charles, 568.
Napoleon, 324, 393, 394.

Nasmyth, 492.
National Association of Trade Unions, 389.
— debt, 300, 460–1, 590.
National Society, 440.
Naval service, 22.
Navigation Acts, 147, 156, 392, 398, 559; and the Colonies, 232–3; 288, 297.
Navvies, 505, 543, 552.
Navy, the, 29, 235–8.
Neale, Vansittart, 576.
Negro labour, 232.
Neilsen, J. B., 354.
Neutrals, seizure of ships of, 393.
Newcastle-on-Tyne, 81.
Newcomen, 348.
'New Customs', 92, 93.
'New Draperies', 212.
New Lanark, 455.
Newman, J. H., 575.
Newport, 569.
Newspapers, 379, 406, 538.
Newton, Sir Isaac, 301.
—, William, 510.
Niger, River, 557.
Night's farm, a, 27.
Night-work prohibited, 66.
Norfolk, 311, 322, 425.
Norman Conquest, effect of, 16.
Northampton, 21, 314, 492, 537.
Northamptonshire, 330.
North-east passage, the, 219.
Northern Star, The, 567.
Northumberland, 349, 360, 519.
North-west passage, 229.
Norway, 79.
Norwich, 256, 333, 524, 526; in eleventh century, 19, 24; on the royal demesne, 55; a port, 81; aliens in, 122; Worsted Seld, 124; pageants at, 132.
Nottingham, 52, 55, 70, 121, 140, 337, 342, 379, 505.
Novgorod, 152.

Oakes, T., 354.
Oastler, Richard, 373, 487, 502, 567, 585.
Oaths of secrecy, 383–4.
O'Brien, James Bronterre, 567, 572.
O'Connell, 508, 569.
O'Connor, Fergus, 567, 569, 570.
Odger, George, 512, 576.
Offa, 24.
Officials paid by the Unions, 509.
Ogilvie, 454.
Oldham, 428, 510.
Old Sarum, 434.
Open-field farming, 180.
— villages, 311.
Open fields, 4–5, 12, 276; in 1750, 314; in 1834, 467.
Opium trade, 556–7.
Orders in Council, 388, 394, 432.
Overseers, salaried, 330.
Owen, Robert, 344, 373, 454, 455, 487.
Oxen, 8, 10, 43; for ploughing, 320.
Oxford, 80, 402.
Oxfordshire, 479.

Paine, Tom, 438, 454.
Palmerston, 549.
Palm-oil, 558.
Papal dues, 166.
Papplewick, 340.
Parish, the, 168–70.
— store, the, 169.
Parkes, Josiah, 468.
Parliament, representation in, before 1832, 433–4; limitation of income of members of, 434; first working-class members of, 516.
Parsons, 317.
Pasture, 10.
— over open fields, 314.
Paupers, 364–5.
Peel, Robert, the elder, 385.
—, Sir Robert, 365, 373, 380, 381, 430, 557, 569, 586, 589.
Penal Code, 428–30.
Penny, silver, 97–8.
Pensions to nuns, 172.
Perkin, Sir W. H., 489.
Peruzzi, the, 144.
Peterloo, 380, 423–4.
Philip II of Spain, possessions of, 221.
Phosphorus, 494.
Physiocrats, 447.
Piccage, 78.
Piecers, wages of, 498.
Piecework, 376.
Pie-Powder, Court of, 79.
Pilgrimage of Grace, the, 192.
Pilgrims, 168.
Pinder, 18.
Pinmakers, 204.
Pinnaces, 237.

Pipe Roll, the, 95.
Piracy, 146.
Pitt, William, the younger, 328, 378, 397, 407, 408, 418, 422, 434, 439, 442, 454, 458, 460, 462.
Pizarro, 218.
Place, Francis, 381–2.
Plato read by miners, 508.
Pleas of the Crown, 28.
Pleuro-pneumonia, 472.
Plough eams, 2.
Ploughs and ploughing, 10, 11, 43.
Pluralities, 444.
Poaching, 331.
Police, 420–1, 568.
Political Economy, 446.
Political Register, The, 426.
Poll-taxes, 109–10, 131, 264, 302–3.
Poor Law, 254–62, 295, 326–30, 418–20, 474, 478, 578–86; of 1834, 580.
Poor Law Board, 580.
Poor Rates, 326.
Poor relief, 161, 164, 166–8.
Population, 326, 362.
Porcelain, 79.
Portsmouth, 156.
Portuguese, the, 218, 219, 220, 227.
Posts, 404, 550.
Potato famine, 589.
Potters and pottery, 25, 140, 383, 400, 503, 508, 509.
Power-loom, 340, 343.
Prebends, 162.
Pre-emption, 29, 90.
Prescot, 505.
'Presentation of the Document', 380, 510–11.
Prices, 106, 183; changes in, 322, 323, 328, 414, 471, 478, 553.
Priests, stipendiary, 165.
Primogeniture, 17, 45, 116.
Printers, 509.
Printing of cottons, 346.
Prisage, 29, 92.
Privy Council, 244, 253, 261, 295.
Produce-rents, 8.
Protection, 122, 291.
Prussia, 59, 79.
Public Health Acts, 530.
Public meetings, suppression of, 418.
Puddling of iron, 354.
Punishments, 73.
Purbeck marble, 72.
Puritanism, effect on women, 206.
Purveyance, 29, 92.

Quarrying, 71, 140.
Queensland, 558.

Rabbits, 44.
Railway and Canal Act of 1854, 542.
Railway Clearing House, 544.
Railways, 471, 474, 488, 495, 532–45, 583; opposition to, 536–40; cost of English, 540; amalgamation of, 542.
Ramsbottam, 495.
Ravenstone, 454.
Reade, John, 468.
Reading, 426.
Reaper, mechanical, 470.
Rebellion, Wat Tyler's, 108.
Recta Prisa, 92.
Rectors, 164.
Reeve, 1, 18, 36, 38.
Reform Act of 1832, 379, 564.
Regrators, 58.
Regulated Companies, 223, 283.
Religious Gilds, 70, 80.
Rent, 471, 474, 478; rise of, 186, 323, 326; raised by enclosures, 316–17; Ricardo's theory of, 452, 573; of allotments, 480.
Report of Poor Law Commission on Women and Children in Agriculture, 479; of Committee on Labouring Poor, 479; of Commission on the Employment of Children in Mines and Collieries, 498.
Requests, Court of, 253.
Retainers disbanded, 119.
Revenue, the king's, 26, 89, 263, 305.
Reverberatory furnace, 354.
Revolt of 1381, 108.
Revolution of 1688, 271.
—, the French, 436, 454.
Ricardo, David, 452.
Rick-firing, 424.
Riga, 156.
Rinderpest, 472.
Ring-spinning, 489.
Risings of peasants in sixteenth century, 191–2.
River, transport by, 81, 398–400.
Roads, 9, 50, 80, 287, 398.
Roberts, W. P., 509.

Rochdale Pioneers, 520.
Roebuck, 569.
Roller-spinning, 338.
Romilly, 418, 429, 439.
Ross, 74.
Rossetti, D. G., 576.
Rotation of crops, 9, 277.
Rothamsted, 470.
Rotherhithe, 404.
Roundsmen, 328, 474.
Rousseau, 454.
Royal Agricultural Society, 471.
Royal Commission on Trade Unionisin, 514.
Royal demesne, 26, 29.
Runrig, 15.
Rural Rides, 428.
Ruskin, John, 487, 576.
Russell, Lord John, 568–9.
Russia, 220, 472.
Rutland, Duke of, 481.
Rye, 143, 434.

Sadler, Michael, 373.
Safety of railways, 543.
Safety lamp, 348.
St. Albans, Abbot of, 110.
St. Bartholomew's Fair, 168.
St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 256.
St. Gilbert of Sempringham, 172.
St. Giles's Fair, Winchester, 78.
St. Thomas's Hospital, 256.
Salisbury Cathedral, 72.
Salt, 9, 25, 45, 46.
San Juan de Ulua, 221.
Scheele, 346.
School of Mines, 490.
Scotland, 496.
Scottish miners, 349.
Scragg, Thomas, 468.
Scutage, 89.
Sea, sovereignty of, 143, 146.
Sea Island cotton, 345.
Seeley, J. R., 576.
Self-acting mule, 489.
Seneschal, 38.
Senior, Nassau, 578–9.
Settlement, Law of, 262, 270, 271, 330, 420, 580.
Severn, 402.
Shaftesbury Abbey, 172.
Shaftesbury, Earl of (Lord Ashley), 373, 479, 487, 502, 557.
Shearing machines, 355–6, 388.
Sheep, 44; right of folding, 7; tar for, 46; farming, 116; runs, 179; new breeds of, 320.
Sheffield, 333, 400, 514, 516, 519.
Shelley, 442, 454.
Sheridan, 377, 378, 418, 438, 439.
Sheriff, 1, 21, 27, 52, 53, 95, 97–8, 434.
Shipbuilders, 518.
Shipham, 440.
Ships, 403–4, 545–9.
Shoemakers, 25.
Shows and fairs, 322.
Shuttle, Kay's flying, 280.
Siam, 557.
Sidmouth, 430–2, 438.
Siemens, 495.
Silk industry, 141, 458.
— women, 141, 205.
Silver, 71; of Mexico, 183.
Six Acts, the, 380, 418.
Slaves, 6, 14, 15, 16, 20, 32, 257.
Slave-trade, 85, 220, 299.
Sliding scales, 518.
Small farmer, disappearance of, 318.
Smith, Adam, 410, 446–9, 458.
—, James, 468.
—, Sydney, 461.
Smiths, 25.
Smuggling, 396, 432.
Socage, 174.
Social Gilds, 70.
Socialism, 454.
Socmen, 6, 7, 16, 34, 36.
Somerset, 355.
Somerset, Duke of, 243.
South America, 344, 396.
Southampton, 24, 55, 78, 81, 124, 150.
Southey, 454.
Spain, 218, 219, 220, 231, 237, 396.
Spaniards, 79.
Speenhamland system, 328–30, 360, 474, 579.
Spencer, 454.
Spies, use of, 430.
Spinning, 338.
Spinning-jenny, 338.
Spitalfields, 198; silk-weavers, 282, 458.
Squatters, 272, 436.
Squires, 317.
Stafford, 505.
Staffordshire, 352, 360, 505, 519.
Stallage, 78.
Stall-feeding, 322.

Stamp duties, 420, 428.
Standard, Battle of the, 29.
Stannary Parliament, 71.
Staple, the, 83, 122, 145.
Staplers, 151.
Star Chamber, Court of, 253.
Statute of Artificers or Apprentices, 248.
— of Labourers, 105.
— of Merton, 102.
Steam-engine, 338, 348, 354.
Steam-engine Makers, Society of, 510.
Steam-hammer, 492.
Steamships, 403, 488, 544.
Steel, 352, 490, 492, 494, 495.
Steel-mill, 348.
Steelyard, 85.
Stephen, King, 17.
Stephens, J. R., 373, 502, 567, 585.
Stephenson, George, 490, 534–5.
Sterling, 98.
Stock, of tallies, 96.
Stock-breeding, 320, 470.
Stockport, 380.
Stockwith, 400.
Stone, 71.
Stourbridge Fair, 79.
Straw-plaiting, 504.
Strikes, 134, 352, 360, 377, 378, 379, 382, 383, 481, 507, 509, 511.
Subsidies, 92, 263, 302.
— to Allies, 407–8.
Suburbs, growth of, 196–8.
Suez Canal, 548.
Suffolk, 425, 481.
Sugar, 232.
Sunderland, 377.
Sussex, 332, 354, 424.
Sweden, 394.
Synthetic dyes, 489.

Tallage, of demesne, 89.
Tallies, 96, 97.
Tar, 46.
Tariff, reductions in, 397.
Taunton, Lord, 537.
Taxation, 89, 301, 324–5, 459–62, 586–91; of movables, 90; on newspapers, 406; on advertisements, 406.
Taxes, 26; in boroughs, 53; farming of, 145.
Tea trade, 545.
Telegraph, 550.
Telford, Thomas, 398.
Tenant farming, 316, 317.
Tenants in chief, 36.
— at will, 272.
Tenants' improvements, 472.
Ten Hours Act, 373, 502, 509.
Tenths and fifteenths, 90, 91.
Tenure in Domesday, 6.
Thames, 402.
Thelwall, 454.
Theory of economics, 446–56, 572–8.
Third-class passengers, 542–3.
Threshing, 42.
Threshing-machines, 424, 470.
Throstle-spinning, 489.
Tied cottages, 349.
Tiles, 140.
Tin, 25, 71, 140.
Tintern, 71.
Tin-workers, 71.
Tithes, 160, 312, 317, 444, 482, 484.
Tobacco, 232.
Tofts, 3.
Tolls in markets, 77.
Toulouse, 89.
Town reeve, 21.
Towns, origin of, 20; Roman and Anglo-Saxon, 20; effect of Norman Conquest on, 25; buy charters, 28; 51 ff.; on Royal Demesne, 54; under lay lords, 55; farm their own taxes, 55; under clergy, 56; special jurisdiction in, 57; in fifteenth century, 135–8; Yorkist in sympathy, 147; migration to, 331, 362; effect of the industrial revolution on, 333–6; development of, 524.
Townshend, Viscount, 277.
Trade, in eleventh century, 24; regulation of, 58; tricks in, 65; report on sixteenth century, 238–40; in eighteenth century, 289–90; increase of, 392–4.
Trade routes, in eleventh century, 24; in thirteenth century, 80, 86–7.
Trade Union Act, 516.
Trade Union Congress, 518.
Trade Unions, 374–85, 456, 480–2, 506–18; comparison with craft gilds, 68, 282; illegal under Common Law, 514, 554, 572, 576.
Trades Councils, 513.
Traders, grouping of, 66.

Trading Companies, 135.
Transportation of prisoners, 232, 429.
Treaties: the Methuen, 392; Commercial, with France, 590.
Trent, 400, 402.
Trimmer, Mrs., 440.
Trinity House, 73.
Truck, 129, 459, 505–6.
— Acts, 283, 506.
— Commission, 505.
Tufnell, H., 436.
Tull, Jethro, 276.
Tunnage and poundage, 92, 263.
Turkey Company, 284.
Turks, 87.
Turner, 418.
Turnips, 277.
Turnpikes, 287, 398.
Tusser, 180.
Tyler, Wat, 110.
Tyndall, 576.

'Unearned increment', 118, 185.
Unemployment, 188; in seventeenth century, 232.
United States, 345, 393, 557.
Unloading of ships, 404.
Usury, 74, 75, 208.
Utrecht, Treaty of, 292–4.

Vacant sees, 162.
Vagabonds, 166, 189–90, 257, 261.
Vagrancy Laws, 443.
Vasco de Gama, 218.
Venetians, 79, 87.
Venice, 153.
Vicars, 163, 165.
Villa, Roman, 14.
Villages, in eleventh century, 3; self-sufficing, 8; types of, 8.
Villeinage, decay of, 101, 112.
Villeins (villani), 1, 6; tenure of, 7, 35; a free man, 14; effect of Norman Conquest on, 16; in thirteenth century, 34; rights of, 35; cannot sue their lord, 35; tallage of, 35; services of, 40; free in towns, 54; protected in king's courts, 113; in sixteenth century, 175.
Vills, 3.
Vineyards, 45.
Virgates, 6, 34.
Virginia, 230–2, 262.

Wage-earners, beginning of, 34; in seventeenth century, 273; in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, 358–63, 488.
Wages, 326, 359–60, 384, 424, 474, 475, 482, 583; of men and women, 47; of artisans, 48; in thirteenth century, 48; rise of, 103, 104; rate fixed, 106, 248; in sixteenth century, 186; of navy, 238; in agriculture, 319; in mines, 349; 'the brazen law of', 433; fixed by consent, 375; laws fixing, 328, 418; of hand-weavers, 489; Ricardo on, 453; women's, 363.
Wage-system among tin-workers, 71.
Wages-fund, 453, 574.
Wales, 311, 490, 500, 506.
Walpole's commercial policy, 304.
Walsingham, 222.
Wandsworth–Croydon Railway, 534.
War, its effect on agriculture, 323.
— finance, under Edward III, 144; in eighteenth century, 305.
—, Hundred Years', 103, 108, 122, 143.
Wardship, 27, 37.
Wars of Roses, 118, 147.
Waste-land, 10, 179, 274.
Water-power, 338.
Watson, James, 566.
Watt, James, 338, 343, 348.
Wealth of Nations, 446.
Wealth, increase of, 439.
Weavers, 360.
Weavers' Act, 248.
— Gilds, 120.
Webb, S. and B., 374–5.
Wedgwood, Josiah, 402, 504.
Week-work, 6, 34.
Weights and measures, 53.
Wellesbourne, 480.
Wemyss, Col., 578.
Wer-gild, 14, 16.
West Indies, 393.
Westminster, 93, 496.
Westminster Abbey, 72.
West Riding, 355.
Wheat, price of, 323–4.
Whitbread, 328, 439, 458.
White-cloth, 196.
White Star Line, 548.

Whittington, Richard, 131.
Widows, 52, 73.
Wight, Isle of, 118.
Wilberforce, William, 438–9.
William I, 1, 32.
Willington, 400.
Willoughby, Sir John, 219.
Wiltshire, 330, 386, 424–6.
Winchester, 19, 22, 55, 57, 74, 78, 121, 122, 161, 425.
Window-tax, 303, 589.
Wine, 46, 141, 293; duties on, 392.
Winsford, 400.
Wite, 28.
Wolsey, 256.
Wolsey's Inquisition of 1517, 243.
Wolverhampton, 402.
Women, 363, 474–6, 501–4; holding land, 17; position in eleventh century, 17; in thirteenth century, 46–7; in Gilds, 61, 62, 73, 205; in Social Gilds, 70; in industry, 73; as apprentices, 73; scutage paid by, 89; disappearance from agriculture, 107; silk workers, 141; in Brewers' Company, 141; as Churchwardens, 169; and the Church, 171; education of, 173; in sixteenth century, 205–6; in mines, 363, 498.
Wool, 355–6, 489; export in thirteenth century, 46; export in fourteenth century, 122; manufacturing process of, 125–7; trade and foreign policy, 144; duty on, 144; export to Flanders, 144; for Italy, 153; in fifteenth century, 178; decline of quality, 181; transfer of centre of industry, 279; protection of industry, 294; price of, 472.
Wool industry, 519; in West of England, 355; in Yorkshire, 355.
Wool-combing, 340, 356.
Wordsworth, 438, 454.
Workhouses, 260, 296, 328, 424, 584.
Working Men's College, 576.
Workshops Regulation Act, 504.
Wrought iron, 352.
Wyclif, John, 109.

Yeomanry (of gilds), 135, 198.
Yeomanry (volunteer cavalry), 422.
Yeomen (freeholders), 175, 272, 317, 331.
York, 524.
Yorkshire, 279, 332, 355, 492, 498, 524.
Young, Arthur, 270, 314, 315, 316, 318, 319, 322, 413.

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359